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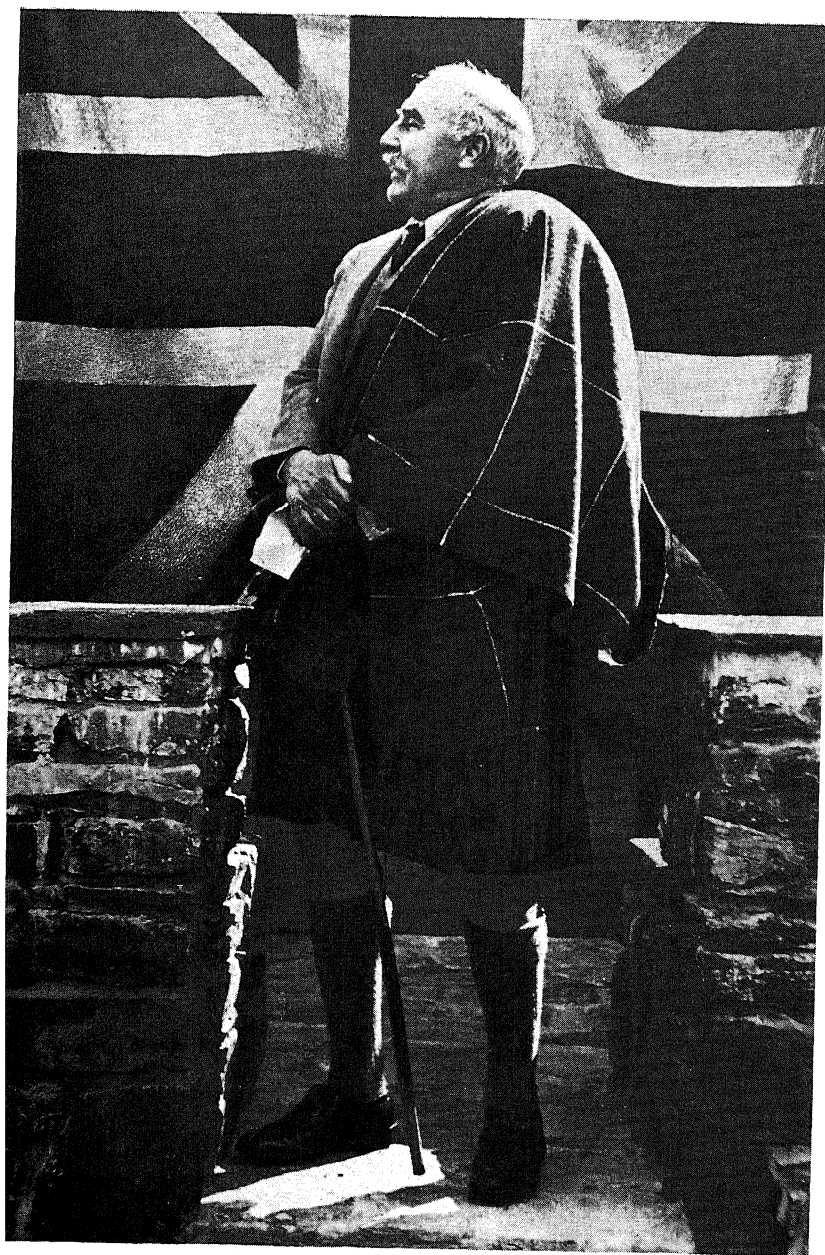
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LORD LOVAT



1932

# LORD LOVAT

K.T., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O.

## *A Biography*

by

The Rt. Hon.

SIR FRANCIS LINDLEY,

G.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E.

*With 34 Illustrations*

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## PREFACE

I UNDERTOOK to write this book because, of all those I have met in a life which has brought me into contact with many men of mark, Lovat was the one who most roused my lasting admiration and affection. The book is intended, therefore, as a tribute to his memory rather than as a chapter of history; and it is only impartial in the sense that, so far as I know, nothing material has been left out and nothing untrue inserted.

It would have been impossible for me to write the book without the constant and ungrudging assistance of Lady Lovat, who collected most of the information on which the story is founded and supplied practically all the letters quoted after 1910, the year of her marriage. To the Dowager Lady Lovat, and the other members of her family, Viscountess Encombe, the Hon. Mrs. Bernard Maxwell, the Hon. Mrs. Stirling of Keir, Major the Hon. Alastair Fraser, and the Hon. Lady Lindley I am indebted for a number of anecdotes of Lovat's youth and for the loan of invaluable early letters.

Amongst many others whose affection for Lovat led them to take unending trouble to help me, Colonel Frederick Allhusen and Colonel Alexander Fraser of Toronto were foremost. The former supplied in carefully arranged form most of the purely military information after the South African War; and to the latter I am indebted for a great deal of the information regarding Lovat's visits to Canada. But Sir Alexander MacEwen, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Samuel Scott, Sir Roy Robinson, Sir John Sutherland, the Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Acland, Sir John Farmer, Mr. Plant (of the Dominions Office), Major Ralph Furse (of the Colonial Office), Major-General R. L. B. Thompson, Brigadier the Hon. Arthur Asquith, Mrs. Kerr,

## PREFACE

Mr. C. T. Atkinson (of Oxford), Colonel William Macdonald, Colonel Kenneth Macdonald (of Skeabost) must have given up almost as much of their valuable time as did Colonel Allhusen and Colonel Alexander Fraser.

Others whose assistance, though equally ungrudging, was less important because they had less information at their disposal, were the Rt. Hon. L. T. Amery, Colonel Sir Gordon Carter, the Rt. Hon. Sir John Gilmour, Colonel H. A. Cape, Colonel Duncan Baillie, Colonel the Hon. Henry Guest, Major Ewen Grant, Brigadier-General D. Brady, Colonel Mallinson, Colonel Donnelly, Lieut.-Colonel A. G. Barnett, the Marquis of Lothian, the Earl of Elgin, General Sir Charles Fergusson, Dr. George Gordon, Sir James Currie, Lord Henry Scott, Colonel D. B. Stewart, Lieut.-Colonel Alan Chichester, Major Hugh Dewar, Mr. Seggie, and Dr. Grundy.

I am also indebted to Mr. Compton Mackenzie for the tribute to Lovat on the wrapper of this volume ; and to the Editor of *Punch* for permission to reproduce the cartoon of the Lovat Scouts.

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## CHAPTER I

### FAMILY HISTORY

1100-1871

HOW far character is affected by heredity and how far by environment is a question which will continue to puzzle the curious ; but it is not doubtful that the two together exert a powerful influence, and on none more than on those who are of long descent and who are brought up in a traditional atmosphere. For this reason no sketch of Lovat's character and abilities would be complete, or even comprehensible, without some account of his family and surroundings.

The Frasers, like the Gordons with whom they were often at feud, were a Norman family which settled in Tweeddale in the twelfth century. There they first made their mark in Scottish history, Sir Alexander Fraser becoming Chamberlain of Scotland and marrying Mary, sister of Robert the Bruce ; whilst Sir Simon, his brother (the first Simon we hear of), was executed by Edward I for his share in the War of Succession. It is from this hero, who defeated the English invaders in three encounters in one day, for which feat he was awarded the honour of bearing on his Arms the three crowns still borne by the Lovat family, that the Frasers of Lovat claim direct descent ; and the claim is borne out by the fact that Hugh Fraser of Lovat held the Barony of Linton in Peeblesshire (formerly belonging to Sir Simon) until 1377. Moreover, the family name in Gaelic has been MacShimidh (the son of Simon) from time immemorial.

The exact date when the Frasers migrated to Invernesshire is not known, but they were in possession of land in the Aird, to the west of Inverness, early in the thirteenth century. The family of Bisset owned most of this territory, and it is

uncertain whether the Frasers obtained it by marriage or by Charter from King Alexander II. In 1325 we meet with a complaint on the part of Simon Fraser and Margaret, his wife, against the Sheriff of Inverness regarding matters connected with the Aird. This Margaret was a daughter of Graham of Lovat, and it was no doubt through her that the Frasers first held Easter and Wester Lovat. Hugh, grandson of Simon I, was styled of the Aird and Lovat, and his son, another Hugh, married Janet, daughter of Thomas Fenton of Beaufort ; so it is possible that Beaufort, the present seat of the family, was added at this time to the Lovat estates. This Hugh journeyed to Durham as one of the Scots hostages for the ransom of James I when that sovereign returned from England in 1424, and he has always been considered by the family historians as the first lord. But the *Scots Peerage* won't have it, and places another Hugh, grandson of the hostage, as the first Lord of Parliament under the title of Lord Lovat, or Lord Fraser of Lovat. Thus the subject of this memoir was only the fourteenth lord according to the *Scots Peerage*, and the sixteenth according to family history. It may safely be said that he never gave a thought to the question ; and we will follow the family.

It is interesting to note that the Frasers, during a part of their history, boasted their Lowland, or possibly their Norman, origin and characteristics. The Aird was, and is, a fertile district, and the Frasers, who had come from similar soil, drew a flattering contrast between their civilized deportment and the amenities of their life and the uncouth manners and brutish existence of the surrounding tribes. Such is the attitude of the author of the Wardlaw MS., an ingenious minister of the Church, and a strong Royalist and Episcopalian, who, in the seventeenth century, wrote the history and doings of the Fraser Clan. It has been suggested that this view, so little in harmony with present fashion, was personal to himself, but analogy elsewhere predisposes one to accept it as prevalent in the Lovat family and therefore in the whole clan with which they were identified. For in most countries a long period elapses before the latest comers cease to despise the original inhabitants and begin to glory in identifying themselves with their blood and customs. In the present case this phase may have begun after the misfortunes of

1745. It was finally consecrated by the pen of Sir Walter Scott.

In this connection it must be borne in mind that the clan system was not of immemorial origin. The best authorities put its birth some time towards the end of the eleventh century, and consider it the direct result of King Malcolm Ceanmon moving his Court from the North to Dunfermline. Distance so weakened the King's authority over the Highlands that men perforce had to find a substitute in the most suitable man of substance in the neighbourhood. He was chosen as chief, and the geographical features of the country precluding his extending his authority over any large area, each district acknowledged a separate head. In principle, the legitimate authority of the sovereign was never disputed. The Royal Writ having ceased to run, authority was delegated to the chiefs over the heads of their feudal superiors, and, though the Duke of Gordon long remained the overlord of the lands held by the Camerons, MacPhersons and Mc'Donells of Keppoch, the men who lived on those lands looked only to Lochiel, to Cluny and to Keppoch for orders. Thus it will be seen that in the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Frasers first came to Invernesshire, the clan system was not an old one, and it is improbable that any organized clan existed in the Aird district.

In the absence of recognized authority the arrival of a powerful family from the South would be a godsend. The people would soon rally round it, and a clan strong enough to protect its members against their neighbours would be formed. How long the process lasted we do not know ; but based on the Aird, one of the most fertile districts west of Aberdeenshire, and led by chiefs of capacity and courage, the Frasers became eventually a powerful body whose chiefs could put over a thousand men into the field. Nor did they lose their touch with the main stream of Scottish history, for it is recounted that the Master of Lovat fell on the field of Flodden in 1513. By the middle of the sixteenth century the clan was strong enough to measure itself with the more numerous Macdonalds ; and in 1544 Hugh, the third lord, led four hundred Frasers against a far larger number of his enemies. In a regular clan battle at Loch Lochy he fell together with his eldest son, a promising lad of nineteen

just home from his education at the University of Paris. This bloody encounter from which few on either side returned is known in Highland history as the "Battle of the Shirts" (Blar-na-lein, in Gaelic), for it was fought on a broiling July day and doublets and plaids were cast aside. And this Hugh is reputed to have possessed those qualities of generosity and courage so conspicuous in his latest descendants.

The astonishing adventures and manœuvres of Simon, the thirteenth lord, who finally backed the wrong horse in 1745 and was the last British subject to be beheaded in the Tower, have often been described in full. In any case they find no appropriate place in this memoir, for the subject of it was not descended from this legendary figure. As the result of Lovat's part in the rebellion, his ancestral house of Castle Dounie was burned to the ground, the estates were forfeited and the title attainted. But this did not prevent his eldest son from raising nearly four thousand men from amongst his clansmen and other Highlanders and fighting heroically for King George both in Portugal and at Quebec. For his services the estates were returned to General Simon Fraser in 1774. He died without surviving male issue, as did all the sons of the hero, or villain, of 1745. The last, Archibald, died in 1815, after being Consul-General in Algiers and M.P. for Inverness. Like his brother, he raised a regiment, the Fraser Fencibles, which did good service in Ireland during the French War.

The suppression of the rising in 1745 ended the traditional life of the Highlands. Roads were made and troops were quartered at strategic points. The clans were disarmed and forbidden to wear their habitual dress. As a consequence, the rule of Law and the arm of the Law replaced the will and power of the Chief.

Other changes followed the onrush of Southern influence which introduced a mercantile spirit more devastating to Highland manners than the Red-Coats. In particular, farmers from the Lowlands started sheep-breeding on a great scale, and the unfortunate crofter was amazed to find the hills and glens which his cattle had grazed for generations cropped by these more profitable invaders. When the Chief could no longer protect his clansmen from punishment and

the clansmen became of less importance to the Chief than the land they occupied, it would be idle to expect the former clan relations to continue between the two. Under such conditions loyal obedience would be unlikely to be carried to such lengths as enabled the notorious Simon not merely to collect a part of his rents when in exile, but, returning suddenly in 1715 after years abroad, to range his clansmen on the side of King George when they had already gone to Perth to fight for the Pretender ; and then in 1745 to launch them at Culloden on the Jacobite side. It has been generally observed that manners are more urbane and courtesy more general in countries where it is habitual to carry arms ; and some falling off in the amenities of daily intercourse might well be expected to follow thorough disarmament. Apart from this, the peculiar relationship, patriarchal rather than feudal, of the Chief to his clansmen, demanded for its smooth working the constant exercise of social gifts of no mean order. Old Simon of 1745 was a pastmaster at striking the right note with his people.

It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that the old Highland traditions perished entirely with the conditions which had given them birth and fostered them. Dr. Johnson remarked that there were more gentlemen than shoes in the Highlands when he visited them some thirty years after Culloden ; and the great Lord Selkirk, much later, was struck by the peculiarly good manners of all classes and the social talent of the gentry. This memoir will show to what a degree both Chief and clansmen respond to traditional Highland appeals and yield to traditional Highland impulses even at the present day.

It may be of interest for a moment to glance at Japan, the only civilized country where the clan system lasted down to modern times. There, as in the Highlands, it was destroyed long after it had become an anachronism, and the changes involved in its destruction were as distressing to individuals as they were in Scotland. Though fundamental differences of religion and of race and long isolation from the outer world made the Japanese clan system differ in important respects from the Scotch, the virtues and vices which it fostered are much the same in both countries. Thus the historically true story of the Forty-seven Ronins, most popular of all Japanese



legends, exemplifying and extolling the virtue of loyalty to the Chief, would have been as much appreciated in the Fraser or the Cameron countries as it is in Choshu. The local colouring would have had to be changed, but that is all. And in the matter of outward manners we notice the same courtesy and dignity. But the Japanese clans only disappeared, officially, eighty years ago, and it is natural that clan feelings should be stronger in Japan than at home. All Englishmen know that a Scotsman will, if it is physically possible, always give a job to, or do business with, another Scotsman rather than with anyone else. But the day is past when a Campbell, a Fraser or a Macdonald insisted on dealing only with a brother clansman. In Japan the smaller clans have, of necessity, been forced into the common mould; but the great clans still hold out. And a Satsuma gentleman in Tokyo will have only Satsuma servants about him, will patronize only Satsuma shops, and will employ doctors, lawyers, architect, etc. exclusively from Satsuma. Only a few days ago a young lady from a Satsuma family was heard to complain that her dentist in Tokyo was a painful performer, whom she would like to change but could not as no other more skilful was to be found in the clan. This complaint is, it is to be feared, ominous of the approaching end of one of those picturesque features which give colour to drab modernity in Japan. But it is time we returned to Scotland.

It will be seen that the extinction of the elder branch of the Lovat family coincided roughly with the transformation of the Highlands; and there is a certain fitness in the fact that the younger branch, which succeeded on the death of the Consul-General, were of more sober stock. Sir Thomas Fraser, second son of Alexander, the sixth Lord Fraser of Lovat, was known as the "Good Tutor of Lovat" for the care he took of his young nephew who succeeded at the age of five. From him the subject of this memoir is descended. By his marriage with the widow of William Chalmers, a much married lady who was also the widow of Thomas Fraser of Strichen, a younger son of the Laird of Philorth, he acquired the estate of Strichen in Aberdeenshire, where the family lived until they succeeded to the Lovat property. Although settled in Aberdeenshire, they kept up their connection with their old home where they possessed the estate

of Knockie ; for Sir Thomas died at Inverness in 1612, and we find his grandson, another Thomas, third of Strichen, carrying on the Fraser feud against the Gordons and fighting Huntly at Inverness ; whilst his grandson, yet another Thomas, held Moniack, close to Beaully, of " His Highness Oliver Cromwell."

The policy of the clan did not differ greatly from that of its neighbours. It followed the line laid down by the Chief of the moment whose judgment was swayed by family and local considerations. If the Chief were a minor or lacking in decision, the tutor of Lovat or some masterful member of the family took control. Thus Sir William Fraser of Brey brought out the clan against Montrose, who destroyed Beaufort ; but the clan fought for Charles II under the Master of Lovat at Worcester and came out again later to support that King. In 1715 the clan, as has been said, assembled at Perth, but withdrew on the orders of Simon as soon as he returned from France ; and in 1745 it came out on the Jacobite side. On the whole we may concede to the worthy author of the Wardlaw MS. that the Lovat family were on the side of law and order and loyalty to the Crown.

In any case, the Frasers of Strichen kept the middle of the road. They married well and prospered. Alexander, fifth of Strichen, espoused a granddaughter of the fifth Earl of Moray, and their descendants consider themselves magnanimous in never having claimed the earldom. But the most notable was Alexander, the seventh of Strichen, who was Lord Justiciary of Scotland and, after forty-five years on the Bench, became a Judge in the Court of Session under the title of Lord Strichen. A great planter of trees and an ingenious innovator in agriculture, he endowed Strichen with those embellishments which later drew encomiums from the critical Doctor Johnson. Moreover, he married Anne, daughter of the first Duke of Argyle and widow of the Earl of Bute, who brought with her many family portraits, silver and linen which are now in the Lovat family. We next come to Alexander, the ninth and last Fraser of Strichen, a Captain of Dragoon Guards who married Amelia, daughter of Leslie of Balquhain. Coming of the oldest Catholic stock in Scotland, it is not surprising that, on the death of her

husband within a year of her bearing him a son, she brought the boy up in her religion. The tradition in the family is that the guardians decided that young Thomas must go to a Protestant school, but that twice he was prevented from starting by floods and storms. In the interval one guardian died and the other lost interest in the spiritual welfare of his ward, whose mother then had her way.

This was the boy who in 1815 succeeded to the Lovat estates on the death of Archibald the Consul-General and M.P. and last surviving son of the notorious Simon. Born in 1802, young Thomas early showed great interest in his new property. He sold Strichen as soon as he came of age and spent the proceeds on improvements to the Lovat estates—buying up adjoining land which had been lost to the family, building farm-houses and planting vast areas. Forestry seems to be, indeed, in the blood of the Lovats ; and we are not surprised to find young Thomas sending his head forester to Germany to learn the latest methods. A great reader with an encyclopædic memory, he was foremost in carrying out schemes to improve conditions in the North. For long distrusted on account of his religion, he finished by winning the confidence of all his neighbours who welcomed his appointment both as Sheriff Principal of Inverness and Lord-Lieutenant of the County—an honour which no Catholic had held before in Scotland and the more notable in that he was a poor public speaker owing to a slight impediment in his speech. Things of little importance in themselves often betray the true character of a man ; and it required some strength of mind in the days of three-bottle men to drink nothing stronger than home-brewed ginger-beer. This was the favourite beverage of Thomas who, in everything a man of method and careful of the welfare of his house, left a recipe behind him which made the ginger-beer of Beaufort Castle famous for generations. Many persons now living have enjoyed it without knowing to whom they owed it. This abstemiousness did not prevent him from offering his guests true Highland hospitality ; and it was no uncommon sight for a belated shepherd in Glenstrathfarrar to see them returning from a bachelor party at Braulen Shooting Lodge tied to the seats of their high dog-carts.

In 1823 Thomas married Charlotte Jerningham, daughter of the eighth Lord Stafford, four of whose ancestors in succession had lost their lives in the Wars of the Roses. The journey from Costessy was a long one and no doubt the good folk of Norfolk looked upon Invernesshire much as one now regards Kamchatka. For a stipulation in the Marriage Settlement provided that Charlotte should be allowed to visit her home at least every other year. She brought to Beaufort a singularly sweet and charitable disposition as well as rare beauty, to which a fine portrait by Lawrence bears witness. Unfortunately, she also brought, or rather fetched on one of those adventurous visits of hers, a pair of squirrels to remind her of her old home. The descendants of these engaging little animals cost her own descendants many thousands of pounds of damage to the woods so truly planted by her husband. In 1837 Thomas was created a peer of the United Kingdom, the first Catholic to be so honoured since the Reformation; and twenty years later the Attainder was removed and the ancient Scots Barony of Lovat returned to him.

From his first arrival in the North he had set his face against the sheep-farming policy which he disapproved both on humanitarian and economic grounds. And when his neighbour, the Chisholm, gave notice to all his crofter tenants to quit, in order to put the ground under sheep, Lord Lovat provided land for them in Glenstrathfarrar where he settled about a hundred families. The experiment proved that the Glen, which afterwards became a deer forest, was unsuitable; and after a sheep farmer had been given notice to make room for them, they were moved further down and their descendants are now mostly on the sunny braes of Farlie. He died in 1876 leaving amongst his papers a memorandum, made when a young man, of the projects he intended to carry out, all of which were then completed. A notable figure in the North.

Lord Thomas and his wife had four sons and four daughters. The eldest son, Simon, Master of Lovat, was the third child. As a young man he went to the Crimea to look after his brother, Alastair, who was fighting with his regiment, the Scots Guards, and who, incidentally, lost his health permanently in that doleful campaign. In 1865 the Master married

Alice Weld Blundell, daughter of Thomas Weld Blundell, a younger son of the Welds of Lulworth Castle, Dorsetshire, who had taken the name of Blundell on inheriting Ince Blundell in Lancashire from a cousin. The Welds are one of the oldest Catholic families in the Kingdom and can trace their ancestry back to Edward I and St. Margaret of Scotland. One of them won the King's Cup for yacht racing in the days of George III and built in Lulworth Park the first Catholic Church since the Reformation, which was only permitted on condition that it did not look like a church. Another gave the land for Stonyhurst, the great Jesuit School in Lancashire. On the female side there is Spanish blood brought in by the Vaughans of Courtfield, two of whom fled to Spain after Culloden. The Spanish strain was so potent that it persisted for generations and, though tenuous in the extreme, is thought by some to be still manifest. Alice, Lady Lovat, is happily still living ; but one who knows her well may be permitted to say that she brought to Beaufort the deepest devotion to her religion, the largest charity for others, a singular freedom from prejudice, a delicate sense of humour and a remarkably keen intellect of which the public knows something from her published works. The marriage was ideal, not conventionally but in reality ; and, after the Master succeeded his father in 1876 and became Lord-Lieutenant of the county, there was no more distinguished couple in Scotland than the new lord and his lady.

The Master had, owing to his father's failing health, managed the estates for some time before he succeeded, and he continued the planting policy of his predecessor. After he succeeded, he was caused much anxiety and expense by lawsuits which have so often been the plague of Highland proprietors. The first was in connection with the salmon fishing rights in the Beaully and its affluents. For some time leave had been given to the Chisholm to fish in that part of the Beaully which ran through his land ; but, on renewing the permission, the new lord was met with a claim to the rights themselves. The Department of Woods and Forests intervened, and speedily putting the Chisholm out of Court, challenged the Lovat Charters. Lord Lovat lost his case at Edinburgh, and it was left to the House of Lords not only to confirm the validity of the charters, but to extend them to a

stretch of the River Glass over which the Lovats had never even claimed fishing rights.

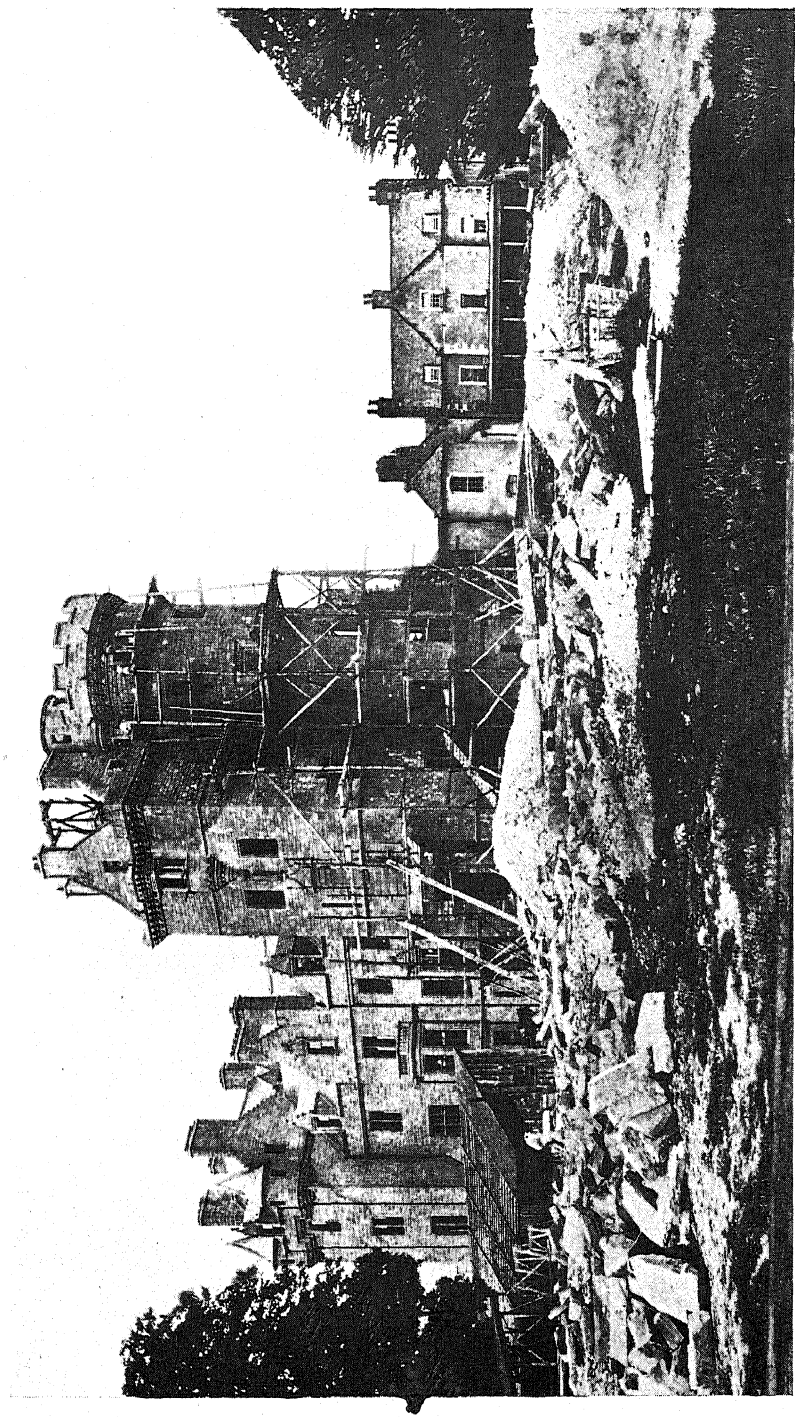
The second lawsuit was more serious and caused the Lovats great anxiety and vast expense. In 1881 a man appeared from Wales claiming the title and estates by virtue of his supposed descent from a younger son of a Lovat of the sixteenth century. His story was that this younger son, having stabbed a piper in a quarrel, had fled to Wales, worked there as a miner and married at the age of eighty. The tale was so fantastic that it would have attracted little notice had not a syndicate, formed to prosecute the claim, succeeded in engaging Harding Giffard and Charles Russell as their counsel. A feverish search in the death registers of Kilmorack and Kiltarlity failed to provide evidence of the death of the reputed murderer ; and it was only at the last moment that Mr. Biscoe of Kinghillie discovered it amongst the documents belonging to the parish of Kirkhill. Its production determined the case in the Lovat's favour before the House of Lords.

Born of a Whig family, the thirteenth lord supported Mr. Gladstone in Lancashire and only withdrew his allegiance when the latter extended his Irish agrarian legislation to Scotland. A good excuse for such an extension had recently been given by a wealthy new-comer to the North, who purchased enormous tracts and turned out a number of his crofter tenants to make way for deer. No one condemned such proceedings more than Lord Lovat, who was heartily in favour of any measures giving the crofters security of tenure. But Gladstone's Act went further than this and declared as null and void the so-called Improving Leases which it had been the deliberate policy of Lord Thomas and his son to multiply amongst their tenantry. Under such leases, a crofter could take up land round his croft at a nominal rent for twenty-one years and thus increase his area of cultivation and his welfare. Much land had been reclaimed under these leases ; and Lord Lovat not only felt that a slur had been cast on his father's memory by treating them as of no validity, but rightly foresaw that their disappearance would put an end to the extension of crofts.

Castle Dounie had been replaced by a small square building costing £300 in which the Royal Commissioner resided

until the estates were returned to General Simon Fraser. Later, two modest wings had been added ; but Lord Thomas had always intended that a more suitable house should be built and he insured his life with the object of leaving funds for a building which he wished to be in what was then considered the only appropriate style—Scottish Baronial. Mr. Wardrup, who had built Lochinsh for the Earl of Stair, was called in ; and in 1880 the building of Beaufort Castle began. Situated hard by the site of Castle Dounie on a high bank overlooking the Beaully, it dominated the country to the north and east, and is a fine example of a manner less appreciated now than fifty years ago. The many critics of its great size should remember that it was begun in a period of prosperity when great properties were thought incomplete without great houses. Both agricultural and sporting rents were at about their peak ; but it was ominous that, in the very year the foundations were laid, a consignment of Australian frozen meat was first successfully marketed in England. The writing was on the wall.

Lord Lovat was as devoted to his religion as was his wife ; and both built a church at Eskadale, four miles up the river, for the Catholic population, and gave the land and other assistance for a Benedictine Monastery at Fort Augustus at the head of Loch Ness. To a singularly handsome person he joined a sense of power and reserve and a total ignorance of what was petty or ill-natured. His stimulating presence brought the best out of those who consorted with him or served him ; and he carried on and handed down to his son the tradition of Lord Thomas that no quarrels were allowed at Beaufort. They might rage elsewhere, but not at Beaufort. Not even a lawsuit, that most fertile breeder of hatred, should be made a personal matter. A fine sportsman and keen soldier, he commanded the Invernesshire Militia which later became the Militia Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders, was for years Captain of the Scottish Twenty at Wimbledon and several times shot in the Scottish Eight for the Elcho Shield. But salmon fishing was his favourite amusement. Scorning waders and with his kilt floating round him in the icy water, he wielded hour after hour a 20-foot rod which is still the wonder of a punier generation and with which he once landed two hundred and



*Beaufort Castle in course of construction*





forty fish in ten days. Though never once in bed for a day during his twenty years of marriage, he was warned towards the end of his life by his doctor that his heart was no longer sound ; and, perhaps with a premonition of the approaching end, he took the young Master of Lovat all round the estates during the summer of 1887 and introduced him to every tenant, to every crofter and to their families. Universally loved and respected, he plunged the whole North in grief when, on September 6th, 1887, he died suddenly on the moor at Moy.

Such is the family history of Simon sixteenth Lord Lovat and twenty-second Chief of the Clan Fraser.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY LIFE AND OXFORD

1871-1893

LIKE most families in the nineteenth century, that at Beaufort was what is now, unhappily, considered a large one. The eldest son died in infancy, and Simon Joseph, Master of Lovat, the third surviving child, was born on November 25th, 1871. With two sisters older than himself and two brothers and three sisters younger, he enjoyed educational advantages unknown to the unfortunate modern "pairs" who have never experienced the rough and tumble of true family life. And to those who were thus brought up, few recreations give more quiet amusement than to read some of our modern writers on the horrors of Victorian childhood. One would imagine that we lived in a state of suspended animation, all our natural instincts suppressed by fear of elders and betters and our minds distorted by strange "complexes." To read such stuff and then think of the family at Beaufort would make the most sober smile ; for there life was a glorious adventure from morning till night, a mixture of Red Indian craft, English propriety and Highland valour. And, in spite of the family being of mixed Highland and English blood, it was the Highland atmosphere and tradition which prevailed. The English mother of these high-spirited children used, indeed, to complain with a humorous smile that they looked upon her merely as a relation by marriage.

In such surroundings it is not surprising that the child early showed his quality. It was not long before his younger brothers and sisters had to fag for him ; at the age of nine he had his first sporting triumph, which probably gave him more pleasure than his truly remarkable ability with rifle



*Lovat's parents*



and gun ever afforded him later in life. For a game-keeper then gave him a catapult with which, on the very first occasion he used it, he killed a partridge ; and those who, like the author, were addicted to the use of catapults when young, will appreciate how amazingly difficult it is to kill a partridge with this weapon, especially when loaded, as on this occasion, with a stone and not a leaden bullet. Needless to say the younger members of the family were for long after kept busy collecting suitable pebbles ; and needless also to say the feat was never repeated. It remains, indeed, a classic instance of "mug's luck." At this period fishing in the Bruiach burn with his elder sister, his boon companion, now Viscountess Encombe, was the absorbing amusement ; and on one occasion it ended with his being led home with the triangle hooks of a minnow embedded in his scalp. It never occurred to the children to untie the cast, and he was solemnly brought up to the house still attached to the rod, being "played," in fact, by his sister like any fish himself.

But it was not only in amusements that the child was father to the man ; and, when only ten years old, he showed that capacity for rising to an occasion which was to be one of his most marked characteristics through life. It was on a hot day at Morar, that lovely shore on the west coast of Invernesshire where the family always spent part of the summer. The children had been bathing and were walking up the river towards the boat which lay ready above the falls to take them home across the Loch. Hugh<sup>1</sup> and Alastair, aged seven and four, had run on ahead ; the nurse was following quietly, and after her walked the Master and his younger sister Ethel<sup>2</sup>. Two boatmen brought up the rear some way behind. Suddenly screams were heard from the nurse, and the Master said to his sister : "I bet you Nannie sees an old cow and thinks it a wild bull." For the shaggy West Highland cattle were a terror to her and a joy to the rest. But it was no false alarm this time ; for the two little boys had got into the heavy boat and untied the painter. She was drifting quickly to the falls below. Nannie, up to her waist in water, clutched her petticoats and yelled. The

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Hugh and the Hon. Alastair Fraser.

<sup>2</sup> The Hon. Etheldreda Fraser, now the Hon. Lady Lindley.

little boys looked dazed and frightened, but were trying to get out the heavy oars. The Master shouted to them to get out one oar only and pull to the other bank where it was possible to catch hold of overhanging branches. He sent his sister back to tell the boatmen to cross the river below the falls where it was shallower ; and, as she rushed off, she heard him call out : " Come out of that, Nannie, you can't possibly do any good and will only get drowned." He then dashed into the river and tried to cross himself. Happily the boys succeeded in clutching the branches and were rescued by the boatmen from certain drowning. Lady Lovat later set up a wooden cross on the bank to commemorate their deliverance.

When not in the open air or doing lessons, the Master was a voracious reader ; and love of reading remained with him through after-life. As one would expect, books of action were his favourites, and none was more constantly pored over than Kinglake's *History of the Crimean War*, which, as has been said, his Uncle Alastair took part in and his father saw. There must have been others on the estate who had also been through the campaign ; for, many years later, some beaters during a covert-shoot at Beaufort were upbraided by the head keeper for jeering at one of their fellows who lagged behind. " You would not walk so fast if you had a bullet in your backside from the Crimean Campaign," roared old Bobbie Bruce in his Highland voice. Even before he could read or write, he was interested in wars and rumours of war ; and one of his sisters remembers how, at that early age, he dictated to his aunt a long letter for the King of Spain advising the harassed monarch how to fight his enemies.

At the age of eleven he was sent to school at the Benedictine Monastery at Fort Augustus which owed its existence to the munificence of his father. The school, which had only just been started, was a small one—less than fifty boys ; and bore no resemblance to present-day Catholic schools at Ampleforth or Downside. With few of the recreations and none of the social advantages of an English Public School, it was no wonder that the boys longed, even more ardently than is usual, for the joys of the holidays. Whilst at Fort Augustus he wrote several times a week to his eldest sister,

who for many years was his closest friend and confidant, and it was whilst at Fort Augustus that his father died. In 1888 he was sent to the Oratory School at Edgbaston to prepare for his Oxford examination. His first impression of the school is given in a letter to his eldest sister<sup>1</sup> just after his arrival.

“ THE ORATORY,  
EDGBASTON,  
BIRMINGHAM.

*Oct. 7th, '88.*

DEAREST OLD MAYMIE,

Thanks much for your Letter. I am so glad you are going in for that class. I hope you will like it and mind you keep up piano and singing, if you will only keep it up I do not mind learning singing with you at least by ourselves. I expect that we will have plenty of time in the Christmas vacs in the five weeks, and it would be great fun if you could teach me some songs and I could learn easy accompaniments. I expect we will have pretty good fun at Southport and we will be able to see old Frank and have good fun with him. I suppose there will be plenty to see and that skating place will be great fun and I will be able to show you my *graceful* skating, so renowned two years ago. We have had splendid weather here and Brum does not seem to be so very smoky after all, not near so bad as I thought at first. I do not care near so much for the place as Fort Augustus, and I do not think it is such a good school, though, perhaps, they teach a bit better, but they are behind the times with regard to buildings and general convenience and room for games. There are rather a sleepy set of chaps in the top form but they are all nice fellows only not much go.

Good-bye, old girl,  
Best love to Mother,  
I remain your affectionate brother,  
LOVAT.”

Here he was unlucky enough to injure his back whilst

<sup>1</sup> Now the Viscountess Encombe.



practising the long jump and was unable to play football or other active games for more than a year. Another letter to his eldest sister tells of this time.

“ORATORY,  
BRUM,  
*Dec. 8th, '88.*

DEAREST OLD GIRL,

Thanks awfully for your two letters which arrived together this morning. I could not make out why no one wrote, but I understand now. I wrote to Mother and Elsie<sup>1</sup> yesterday, but I suppose they do not read letters during the retreat. You did rather a sharp thing with those tickets, did you sell any more afterwards? Thanks very much for the stuff you sent me for the grub; it was the most successful one that has been had, at least so the fellows told me, and, of course, it is all due to you. My back is almost all right now, and though I have not been able to play football yet I have played a lot of tennis instead. I get about three sets a day on an average and I can play far better now than I could in the Vacs. I have come out as a player up at the net and the last game I played in, the other side tried to take shots at me, but I was too sharp for them and we won a love set. We have had rotten weather lately, but on last Saturday we had a beautiful day and we got off morning study to have a game at Football. I was unable to play so I went for a walk and after walking for about four miles I at last got out of the Brum smoke for the first time since I have been here. I think I met Fitz H. Brockles on the steamer going to Glendoe. I know the one I met was married to Everard Clifford's sister.

I remain your affectionate brother,

LOVAT.”

In June, 1889, he went to Wharton Hood, that friend of young athletes of the 'nineties, who performed some minor operation described in a letter to his eldest sister.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Hon. Mrs. Bernard Maxwell.

“ 49 PARK LANE,  
LONDON,  
*June 18/89.*

MY DEAR MAYMIE,

I hope you are not angry at my not having written but I was so excited about this back of mine that I could not put my hand to anything. I had an operation to-day which Wharton Hood says was very successful. I had ether but I did not tell Mother so in my letter this morning as I thought she might be anxious. I feel rather headache but nothing more. I have been living on the cheap since I have been here. It was awfully nailing of the Cornler to lend me his rooms and give me breakfast as well. I have done nothing particular as yet, but I am going to a Theatre to-morrow. The best of this place is that it is very central and so I have not got to spend a young fortune on cabs.

I will write soon again, mind you do ditto.

I remain,

Yr affectionate Brother,

LOVAT.”

The reference to the “ Cornler ” requires an explanation. It is the Highland manner of pronouncing the word “ Colonel ” and was used by the children as a kind of nickname for their uncle Colonel, the Hon. Henry Fraser, then commanding a battalion of the Scots Guards. In the Regiment and in London Society he was universally known as “ Pope ” Fraser or more familiarly “ Old Pope ”—an appellation originally given to his elder brother Alastair to distinguish him from a Fraser of Saltoun, also in the Scots Guards, and known as “ the Pagan.” After his retirement he lived at Beaufort, first in the house and later in the little lodge by his beloved river. A man of antique mould, the “ Cornler ” was as well known a figure in the Highlands as on the racecourse, the love of which eventually caused his financial downfall.

A hooked and aquiline nose, combined with the heavy upturned eyebrows of his family, gave his powerful frame an

aspect of ferocity in strange contrast with the true kindliness of his character. His foibles, especially his habit of veiling things in mystery, were a constant source of amusement to young and old alike. He rarely spoke of racing, even in his own sanctum at Beaufort, above a whisper, fearing, apparently, the presence of some tout behind the door. And when starting out shooting he would always, on leaving the house, enjoin the strictest silence on the irrepressible younger guns and their companions. Yet how he used to roar at the stories of Oxford escapades told by his nephew and his friends! With a good understanding and knowledge of French he became wholly absorbed in sport—stalking, shooting, fishing and racing took up his time the year round. He died in 1903 a much loved figure in a happy and departed epoch.

Lovat's back troubled him for some time after this, but he recovered from the injury completely at Oxford. Two more letters, one to his brother Hugh just before he hurt himself and the other to his eldest sister, show how young he was for his age, over seventeen, and how devoted to his family.

*" Oct. 12/88.*

DEAREST OLD HUGH,

How are you off for soap?<sup>1</sup> I hope you have not wasted any of the stock. We are going to have a great grub to-night as it is the birthday of one of our form and we have arranged that everyone has to stand a grub on his birthday. I believe this fellow has got 5 bob worth of grub and the feast begins at 9 p.m., and it all has to be done on the sly as the articles are all procured in the town and therefore contraband. It was awfully good of you to write me such a ripping long letter old chap and so close also. I have got a lot of letters to answer since I have been here so I was unable to write sooner. I have had 32 letters since I have been here and have had to answer about 20 and I was about 15 behind-hand in the holidays so I have had my hand full you may

<sup>1</sup> This enquiry was a favourite catchword of the time.

perceive. I boil<sup>1</sup> almost every night with a fellow here, but yesterday we lent our pot for 5 minutes to another fool and he got nailed at once and our pot was confiscated which was rot, however it was only 8d. so we have got another and I have just got my cup of cocoa under a desk at the present moment. We had a good game at football to-day, but the fellows pass very little so the games are hardly as good as the ones at Fort Augustus. I expect I will go back for certain at the end of this year to the old Fort and we will be able to have great fun if I am on the Glospier and you pretty high up in the School, so they will not mind us going out together and then Spadger<sup>2</sup> will be able to go too. I would like awfully to play football against those college fellows but there is no chance of that for a year when you will be in the first eleven also and perhaps Spadger. I hope you can read this as I have not read it over. When you write to me do not mind about writing, etc., but just scribble it and send it. Give best love to old Spadger and say I will write.

LOVAT."

" Feb. 8/89.

BRUM.

MY DEAREST M,

Thank much for the chink which you sent. I will pay you back when we next meet but unless you wish for it sooner. I have had a cold for the last two days. The whole school have had them almost. The Doctor told another fellow and myself that we were to stay in the library and not go out so we spent a most wretched day there. We played nap for  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. pts. some of the day, we were very equal most of the time but I won 60 in the end. I read most of the day and finished a book called *Val Strange*, it is an awfully good book I think and terribly exciting. I read straight ahead without being able to put it down.

Tommy turned up on Tuesday after dinner. I got leave from John to go out with him and we went down to Brum.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably making cocoa.

<sup>2</sup> His brother Alastair.

He also took Washy Hibbert (the youth who almost killed Evey & Tommy shooting at a Blackbird). We had great fun and had 2 games of billiards and visited almost every refreshment room in the town. Tommy was simply like a siloe nothing would appease him. He could not get to Huntingdon that night so he had to stay in Brum the whole night. How is Grandmama. With best love to all.

I remain,

Your affect. Brother,

LOVAT.

P.S.—Please send me some notepaper. I like grey best, not so blue as the stuff I write on at present, but lighter in colour.”

Lovat had been sent to Edgbaston partly to be near Cardinal Newman and one cannot but wonder what His Eminence would have thought of the epistolary style, if not of the matter, of this letter.

Lovat's education left deep marks both on his character and his attainments. On the one hand, it left him entirely free from those conventions and inhibitions often produced in our Public Schools. His outlook was, in some ways, more continental than British, and no one was less insular or more receptive of new ideas. His lack of self-consciousness was remarkable through life and his sociability and interest in every subject was of the seventeenth rather than the nineteenth century. His religion, solidly embedded in childhood, was fortified by his school education. But his whole bent was too active and practical to admit of much dwelling on religious subjects. With him religion was an accepted fact, always the unchanging background of his life and no matter for speculation or discussion. Thus he had no experience of those religious hesitations and heart-searchings common to so many of his contemporaries of the Church of England. His religion was a liberating force setting his mind free to wander at will. But if his unusual education brought him solid advantages it was not without serious drawbacks. He learned nothing of steady application nor of literary precision at school. He did not even lay the foundations

for attaining them later. All through his life he suffered grievously from lack of method and order in his work ; and it took him years of humble endeavour to express himself well on paper. At a Public School one learns as much from one's schoolfellows as from one's teachers. But at Fort Augustus the school was too small for much to be gained from this source. In games, at that time a serious part of education, it was the same. Richly endowed with those qualities of courage, active strength and harmony between hand and eye which make the skilful player of games, he could, with proper tuition, have excelled on any field. He did, indeed, play successfully for his college at Oxford both at cricket and at rugby football, but he should easily have been a double Blue. The nature of his style can be realized from the fact that—much to his annoyance—his friends called his bowling “ the Highland Fling.”

But, in noting these defects of education, one must bear in mind that Lovat suffered a calamitous loss by the death of his father before he was sixteen—the very age at which a boy first begins to realize the worth of, and profit by, the example of such a man.

His real aptitude for games only came into its own on the Shinty Field. This Highland pastime was languishing in the early 'eighties and its revival was due to his enthusiasm. Untrammelled by rules and fired with local patriotism the shinty player of those days dealt blows with a heavy stick on all who came his way. Nor, in a really tight match, was play confined to those officially in the game. The spectators would join in and hammer the opposing side. Casualties were numerous and yet, at the age of ten, we find the Master of Lovat allowed by his father to play with grown-up men in the annual New Year's match. Those who knew the game of shinty and New Year's Day in the Highlands fifty years ago will be in doubt which to place the higher, the moral courage of the father or the physical pluck of the boy. When older, he often played with the Lovat team both at home and out matches, as did his brother Hugh, a man of immense physical strength and determination. Before a match began, Lovat used regularly to warn his men not to play rough and to obey the referee. His warnings were not always heeded ; for at one match, at least, half the players were laid out

before the end. But, even in this case, his authority was in so far respected that his team came up to him one by one and solemnly averred "It was not me, my lord, it was not me." Shinty is now the great Highland game; and its revival is entirely due to Lovat. Before he took it in hand at the age of eighteen, the uncertainty of the rules and the bitterness following lawless contests made it impossible to arrange matches except at long intervals and after arduous negotiations. By getting the rules codified and composing the worst of the quarrels, Lovat put on its legs the Camanachd (Shinty) Association which now covers the whole Highlands. And it is difficult to exaggerate the influence the game has had in maintaining the interest of the young men in their own country district and counteracting the attraction of the towns. Incidentally Lovat's early success in this field not merely made him the best known young man in the Highlands, but gave him confidence to tackle more important tasks.

The decision to send Lovat to Oxford was neither lightly taken nor easily executed. There were few Catholics at Oxford in the 'eighties; and opposition to sending a Catholic boy there was strong both in clerical and in lay circles. But Lady Lovat was fully alive to the disadvantages of her son's early education and held strongly that Catholics kept too much to themselves. It was good neither for them nor for the country. Moreover, her late husband had intended to send his eldest son to Oxford and his wishes must be respected. Strong in her own sense of right she invited the Cardinal<sup>1</sup>, who was at first opposed to the step, to go into the question fully and to compare the proportion of young Catholics from the universities who had subsequently gone wrong with those who had been led astray without the advantages of Oxford or of Cambridge. The comparison is said to have turned out in favour of the universities. At any rate the opposition gave way to a determined and intelligent mother who knew what she wanted for her son. It would have been against all precedent had it not done so; and Lovat went to Magdalen College, Oxford, as an Army candidate, in the autumn of 1890.

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Vaughan.

It is difficult to paint adequately the delights of Oxford to a boy educated as had been Lovat, with his ardent temperament, intense vitality and love of sociability. For nearly all his fellow undergraduates, Magdalen was but a continuation of their life at school. Horizons were wider and liberty greater ; but they found hosts of old friends, studied much the same subjects and followed, in the main, the same amusements. Many of them, too, had an affection for their old school which Oxford could never hope to rival. Compare the entry into Oxford life of such as these with that of Lovat—educated in a remote Highland glen in the company of monks and a score of schoolfellows.

For him none of the freshness had worn off the time-honoured jokes and stories ; and he illustrated every day by his spontaneous laughter the truth of Shakespeare's penetrating adage :

“ A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it.”

In short he entered an entirely new and unknown world, and he threw himself into it with all the ardour and the curiosity of a sixteenth-century explorer. Knowing personally but one undergraduate in the whole university—a worthy Bavarian Baron of the suggestive name of Von Böselager—he had more friends than most by the end of his first term. By the end of his second, he was a member of Vincent's Club, reserved almost exclusively for distinguished third-year men or for Blues ; and by the end of his first year he had, probably, the most extensive acquaintance of any undergraduate. His Magdalen intimates were continually surprised to find that Lovat was a friend of some eccentric member of another college or of some young Don of whom they had never heard. It would be idle to pretend that his position and his name did not help him. They drew attention to the man but they did not do more than that. Once attention was attracted, the rest was done by a personality which all those who knew him remember with affection. And of all his winning attributes, his manners were, perhaps, the one which, quite unconsciously on both sides, drew most hearts. They were the natural manifestation of a mind solicitous of the feelings of others and acutely conscious of the mental atmosphere around him. It is said that all men have something of the



woman in them and this was the womanly side of this splendid young man—a feminine intuition of other's feelings and a desire to spare them. It made no difference with whom he was dealing. He always found, instinctively and instantaneously, the right note. No one better exemplified the profound significance of the Winchester College motto "Manners makyth Man"; yet he learned his at no English Public School. They were in the true Highland tradition; bred in the bone and brought to maturity by the example of those around him.

The choice of Magdalen by Lady Lovat was a particularly happy one. The college, after years of mediocrity, had been raised to the first rank by the zeal and capacity of Dr. Herbert Warren, then at the height of his powers. The undergraduates regarded him, of course, as an old man; and I remember my surprise when, on looking him up in a book of reference long after, I found that he was thirty-eight years of age when Lovat went up in 1890. Many were the stories of the President—or Pre as he was always called—current amongst the undergraduates; and it cannot be denied that the tone of his voice and certain well-marked but harmless foibles lent themselves to ribaldry. But he was a great Head of a college and attracted to Magdalen numbers of promising young men, not only from the most fashionable Public Schools, but from outside as well. Lovat was amongst these latter and was a favourite with the Pre. In athletics the college was in the front rank, being head of the river in 1892 and 1893 and winning the football cup at least once in those years. There were hunting men, beagling men, rowing men, cricketers, footballers, racket players and players of lawn tennis, all notable exponents of their skill, though the more enterprising held the last-named in contempt as "pat ballers." The choir, under the master hand of Dr. Varley Roberts, was unrivalled; and the Singing Scholars, or Demies as they were called, added much to the success of the smoking concerts. Nor were academic pursuits neglected. All who went to Magdalen were expected to take up a final Honours School; and, if Thirds were numerous, the number of Firsts was excelled only by that attained by Balliol.

But the success of the college in its widest sense was due to the absence of cliques. These were the curse of some of

the larger colleges, but at Magdalen the rowing Blue was not a man apart consorting only with his fellows. He mixed with all and sundry on equal terms ; and men following totally different pursuits were often the closest friends. This good fellowship was largely due to the institution of Junior Common Room in which a " Wine " was held every Sunday after dinner during the two winter terms. And this was followed by an " After Common Room," or smoking concert, given in the rooms of some hospitable undergraduate, often Lovat himself, who, with one or two other hosts, provided the refreshments. Guests from outside were invited freely to both these entertainments, and added greatly to the general enjoyment. Sometimes there was a conjurer or even a hypnotist—so called at least ; but as a rule the singing was the thing. And no one lucky enough to be present will have forgotten the glorious bass voice of Mr. H. A. Tapsfield, a singing Demy and the most resolute half-back at the university, later a Canon of the Church, when he embarked on his favourite song of " Drinking " ; or the rendering of that rousing song " She galloped all round the Arena " by Mr. Frederick Halsey, also an ornament of the Church later in life ; or, finally, " The fly be on the turmut " by that talented musician and ingenious vocalist, Sir Richard Paget. On fine nights the party occasionally finished in one of the quadrangles with a cavalry encounter. Here Lovat was supreme. With a heavyish man on his back he would overturn one opponent after the other till he was left the victor. There was very little drunkenness at Magdalen in those days. A few undergraduates with phenomenally weak heads got drunk from time to time ; and there was some drunkenness on really big occasions when men went out of training after effecting a series of bumps or keeping the college boat at the head of the river. Lovat was the normal undergraduate in the matter of drinking with a far stronger head than most. He never smoked till quite late in life. Gambling, like drinking, seems to be a periodical visitation such as a pest of lemmings. It did not flourish at Magdalen in Lovat's day ; though a roulette table existed for a short period until the observant detected that the ball favoured certain partitions. Outside, there was a fair amount of gambling, but hardly ever high enough to cause serious embarrassment. Lovat enjoyed such

play. It appealed to his spirit of adventure and love of new experience.

No account of life at Magdalen would be complete without mentioning Richard Gunston, the Steward of the Junior Common Room. His character has been sketched by Mr. Compton Mackenzie, himself a Magdalen man, in *Sinister Street* with an artistic sureness of touch which cannot here be approached. But he was a great admirer and friend of Lovat's and his influence on the life of the college was such that mention of him should not be omitted. Looking back, most of us realize how much we owe to those occupying humbler stations in life than ourselves. What lessons in charity, courage, loyalty, honesty and homely wisdom have we not received, and even profited by, from such men as gamekeepers, gardeners, grooms or butlers ! And it is safe to say that no Magdalen man who was at the college during Gunston's years of service but remembers him, not merely with affection and esteem, but as a great college institution. Gunner, as he was universally called, lived in a tiny room almost immediately below the Junior Common Room. Here, perched at a high desk, he kept his accounts, and here he took orders for such things as wine, tobacco and biscuits, and dealt them out to those who required them at once. After dinner in hall this little room was crowded to suffocation by undergraduates demanding coffee and cigarettes, but after a time the bulk would drift away and leave Gunner and his sanctum to a select few. During the crush one could admire his patience and unfailing courtesy untinged by the slightest sign of servility ; but it was later in the evening that Lovat and his friends could best enjoy his wit and, if specially favoured, witness his famous banana trick which is practised by old Magdalen men to this day when they foregather in distant parts of the earth. Sitting and standing round the little room, the undergraduates would ask old Gunner his opinion on matters and on men—sure of getting a shrewd reply. His favourite description of the retiring undergraduate was "A very quiet man. Just a cup of coffee and a cigarette." Or Gunner would listen whilst the rest held forth with all the cocksureness of youth. For instance, on one evening, the future of the monarchy was the topic, and all agreed that it was out of the question that the then

Prince of Wales should ever reign. King Edward became, of course, the most popular of Sovereigns, and it is salutary to recall the futility of youthful views and prophecies in an age when they abound and gain surprising credence. Lovat often talked of this conversation in later life.

It was almost as great a day for Gunner as for the Pre when the present Prince of Wales came to the college as an undergraduate ; and it was worth going down to Magdalen to hear him describe the visit of Their Majesties to his room and their inspection of their son's account in his famous book. What the King said and what the Queen said and what he replied. He kept up a correspondence with some of his old friends, and I had two rare letters from him when at Petrograd during the War. He retired in 1914, and Magdalen men subscribed to have his portrait painted by John Collier. It hangs in the Junior Common Room—one of the two makers of Magdalen College before the War.

New College was the only other college which had a Junior Common Room ; and there, too, was a Gunner, but in Magdalen estimation an inferior one. New College resembled Magdalen more than did any other college, and was the one where Magdalen had most friends, and with which it was in the most constant rivalry on the river and in the football field. Other colleges were content with wine-clubs, and some had more than one. Brasenose had two, the Phoenix and the Hell Fire, the rowdiest in the university. Balliol had the famous Annandale Society whose members entertained strangers once a term at a banquet which usually left its mark on the college buildings. Christ Church had several ; and Oriel College had the most urbane of them all, composed of a dozen members who had the privilege of dining in hall once a week after the regular college dinner was over. They dressed for dinner and oysters always figured on the bill-of-fare in their season. Oriel was a small college in those days and had some notable athletes. The Palairats, the Brains and Vernon Hill—all from Somerset. Magdalen had a wine-club, "The Flickerers," before Lovat went up. Few of the best men in the college ever belonged to it, and some of them, such as the late Lord Chelmsford, discouraged it openly as likely to lead to cliques. It perished in 1890 much to the advantage of the college. The only

club at Magdalen was the Waynflete Debating Society, which was not taken seriously and only met to debate. On one occasion Lovat spoke on the subject of the desirability of admitting foreign waiters to England. So all is not so new in this post-war world as some would have us believe.

It is curious to think how completely Oxford has changed as regards the eternal problem of women. In Lovat's day it is not too much to say that, excepting during Eights week, no undergraduate ever spoke to a woman during term time except very occasionally to Mrs. Warren. (Commemoration is after term is over.) What is more, they never thought of them either ; and what Lovat called the "National Sport of the French" was a constant source of ribald joking. All energies and thoughts were occupied with sport, games and work ; and it was, I fear, in this order that these themes interested Lovat at this period. If an undergraduate was seen talking to a girl in the streets he was quite likely to be sent down unless he had some good explanation ; for it was assumed, and correctly assumed, that his object would not bear examination. During Eights week a crowd of young ladies descended on the university ; all chaperoned by their mothers or other elderly married relatives. This was fun, but it was not part of regular Oxford life. Personally, I cannot imagine that undergraduate life would have been at all the same as it was had we rubbed shoulders at our lectures with a lot of pretty girls. It might have been more enjoyable than it was, though that is difficult to believe ; it could not have been the same. Would it have produced more useful citizens and better leaders ? The future alone will show whether the finished product of this new system is equal to that of the old. Its quality will be, in any case, entirely different.

Such was the Oxford in which Lovat spent three years of his youth. There was no field of activity into which he did not throw himself with ardour and none to which he confined his attention. Though with only a little larger allowance than most of his fellow undergraduates, he kept a horse or two during the winter, and it was at Oxford that he became passionately fond of hunting. Lack of early tuition was in this, as in other spheres, a handicap which was difficult to overcome. But his natural eye for country and his

determination carried him ahead of many finer horsemen and his frequent falls served only to increase his enthusiasm. He was extremely quick at picking up both the jargon and the essentials of any subject which interested him ; and in both these accomplishments he owed much in the present case to being taken in hand by the Honourable Greville Willoughby, later Lord Willoughby de Broke, Master of the Warwickshire Hounds. By the end of his first season one would have thought he had been brought up in the Midlands. I doubt if there was another man in the whole university who combined hunting with rugby football as did Lovat ; and a letter to his second sister written during his first term shows his enjoyment of the game and his share in the new Oxford life. No wonder he twice broke his nose at the game.

“ MAGDALEN COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.

DEAR OLD LAMB,<sup>1</sup>

Thanks much for yr letters, you are awfully good to write such long ones. In this place one is always in such a desperate hurry that one never has time to do anything in the end, that one wants. We have had some great footer matches lately, yesterday we had a most desperate match against Univ. folk and beat them by 2 goals and a try to 2 goals. It was a frightfully close match and became as rough a game as you would see anywhere. I have got to pay some calls, then go to a coach, then feed and go to a play, then go to a wine, and then to roost.

I remain,  
LOVAT.”

Even rowing, usually the close preserve of specialists, tempted Lovat, who took part in more than one race, all the more gruelling for his lack of any regular training. It was too late to begin racquets, fives or real tennis. But the

<sup>1</sup> A nickname for his second sister, now the Hon. Mrs. Bernard Maxwell.

summer term is the term for enjoyment at Oxford and a letter to his eldest sister written in May, 1891, shows how soon Lovat found it out.

“VINCENT’S CLUB,  
OXFORD.

*May 1/91.*

MY DEAR M.,

We have been having ripping weather here and cricket everyday. I made 71 in our first match and 36 yesterday. I had a very jolly innings the first day as the bowling was nice and easy and I got some pretty useful smacks. The 36 was against Keble and as it was against two of the Varsity bowlers it was the better innings of the two. We had a most glorious picnic last Sunday. We started out in Canadian canoes and had a heavy Hock lunch up the river. After lunch we decided that we must take some hard exercise so we ran a bee-line across country. The fields were small and the fences big and there were some glorious purlers taken. One ass jumped at two cow-rails and a very wide ditch on the landing side, he took off too near the rails hit them hard and landed on the broad of his back in the most filthy mud hole ever seen. On Thursday last a large party went to some races near here. They were the most blackguard things I have ever seen. One man deliberately fell off at the last fence to avoid winning as he started a hot favourite. There was some considerable sickness and the man only escaped being mauled by the mob, by making a hasty retreat into the paddock. I won the sum of £10 by standing over the Bookie I was betting with with a brolly ready to seize him if he tried to bolt. Several idiots were welshed and I put it down to my large bulk and formidable weapon that I secured my money.

I remain,

Yours ever,

LOVAT.”

Before getting into the college first eleven, he played in the second and was a member of the Hardknockers Club.

This was a band of Magdalen men who prided themselves not so much on their science as on their brawn. They played the neighbouring village teams and got harder knocks than they gave on many a fiery wicket. He was at Abingdon that dreadful day when Kortright, then unknown but next year famous as the fastest bowler in England, appeared on the other side. The ground was as hard as a rock, and rough beyond belief. The Hardknockers were all out, and thankfully out, for thirteen. The safety bicycle and pneumatic tyre was just coming in at this time and the combination provided the fastest means of progression. Lovat had never learned to ride ; but the second day of his apprenticeship he set off fifteen miles over a hilly road to inspect a rookery which he and his friends intended to hire for the shooting. For some time he kept up gallantly, but finally the rest agreed to go on and interview the farmer. Looking long and anxiously down the road which had a corner some two hundred yards off, they suddenly saw a bicycle shoot across and fall over on the grassy track by the side of the road. For an appreciable time there was no other movement, then slowly a dishevelled man rose and began to remount. He was completely exhausted and how he got home no one knows. He probably walked by the side of his machine, for, accustomed to the hill from boyhood, no fatigue would have stopped his walking fifteen miles.

With such vitality and high spirits, it was a certainty that Lovat would come into collision with authority, and, much to his annoyance, he was ploughed in "Smalls" his first term. The first time he was sent down was near the end of his second term and the occasion was a foolish and harmless rag. There were about half a dozen of his friends sent down till the end of the term, which was so near that their absence did not entail the loss of the term, which would have been a serious matter. Lovat went home to Beaufort whilst others paid visits to their friends so that their parents might not know they had not seen the term out. The second time was in the middle of his last term and seriously interfered with his work. Magdalen was head of the river that year and Lovat could not bear to miss the occasion. As the pistol started the crews, a Church of England parson with a large black beard and full clerical dress was the first to raise a



cheer and never ceased to keep level with the boat and roar with the best until, victorious, they reached the Magdalen barge. It was Lovat ; and he kept up the disguise during most of the week without detection. But there was one historical rag in which Lovat was the leading spirit—a rag which was immortalized in caricature in Shrimpton's shop in the Broad. One evening a party of Magdalen undergraduates were sitting quietly in Lovat's rooms after dinner when a friend came in and announced that there was a Socialist meeting taking place in certain rooms in New Buildings, and, to make matters worse, he added that a man named Bernard Shaw from London and some townsmen from Oxford were amongst them. Rightly or wrongly it was unanimously held that Magdalen was no place for Socialist meetings, and that the reputation of the college must be vindicated. Headed by Lovat, enchanted at the excuse for a good rag, the storming party rushed up to the first floor of New Buildings and immediately screwed the plotters into the rooms. Whilst some puffed pepper through the key-hole, others pitched jugs of water through the fan-light over the stout door. Suddenly a spy rushed up to say that the villains were letting themselves down by the bed-clothes into the deer park below. They did not succeed because the end of the sheets were intercepted as they dangled past a lower window and were drawn into the rooms below.

Finally, the door was unscrewed and the party let out, being plentifully doused with water as they went down the stairs. There was a further scuffle in the cloisters and the riot was only ended by the appearance of the Dean ; but not before a wig had been snatched from the head of a gentleman named Himes, who, as was afterwards discovered, was the college sweep and a herbalist. This trophy adorned the rooms of Albert Savory, a scholar of Winchester and a fine horseman, until he went down. He was killed in the South African War. Oxford had less news value then than now ; but a description of this affair got into the London papers, and the owner of the rooms, later a high Colonial official, protested against its accuracy, vowing that there was no Socialist meeting at all and that there was not a Socialist at Magdalen. Mr. Bernard Shaw, on his side,

wrote a most good-tempered and amusing letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*; which he has kindly permitted me to republish here.

#### REVOLUTIONARY PROGRESS AT OXFORD

*"To : The Editor of the 'Pall Mall Gazette' ;*

*From : G. Bernard Shaw : OXFORD : February 21st, 1892.*

SIR,

Will you be so good as to allow me to use your columns to thank the members of Magdalen College, Oxford, for the very enthusiastic reception which they have just accorded to the first Socialist who has ever lectured within their walls? The greatest difficulty with which a public speaker has to struggle is the tendency of the audience to leave before the conclusion of his remarks. I therefore desire especially to thank the thoughtful and self-sacrificing body of undergraduates who voluntarily suffered exclusion from the room in order that they might secure the door on the outside and so retain my audience screwbound to the last syllable of the vote of thanks. I desire to explain, however, that I do not advocate the indiscriminate destruction of property as a first step towards Socialism, and that their action in entirely wrecking the adjoining chamber by a vigorous bombardment of coals, buckets of water, and asafœtida, though well-meant, was not precisely on the lines which I was laying down inside. Nor, though I expressed myself as in favour of a considerable extension of Communism in the future, did I contemplate the immediate throwing of all the portable property in the lobby into a common stock, beginning with my own hat, gloves, and umbrella. Not that I grudge these articles to Magdalen College, but that I wish them to be regarded as an involuntary donation from myself to the present holders rather than as having been scientifically communized.

Speaking as a musical critic, I cannot say that the singing of the National Anthem which accompanied these modest beginnings of revolution was as successful as that of 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay,' which one of my friends within the room kindly supported, at the general request, by a pianoforte

accompaniment. It is injurious to the voice, I may add, to sing in an atmosphere rendered somewhat pungent by the projection of red pepper on a heated shovel.

I need not dwell on the friendly care which was taken not to unscrew the door until our proceedings were entirely over. I wish to say, however, that we should not have incommoded our friends by crowding the staircase had not the rope formed of two blankets, by which we originally intended to proceed from the apartment directly into the open air, unhappily given way under the strain of being energetically steadied at one end by the outside and at the other by the inside party. There was really no danger of the friction igniting the blankets, so that the pains of the detachment posted at an upper window to keep them drenched with water were unnecessary. The gentleman who rendered me a similar attention from the landing above as I descended the stairs also wasted most of his moisture through infirmity of aim ; but his hospitable desire to speed the parting guest was unmistakable.

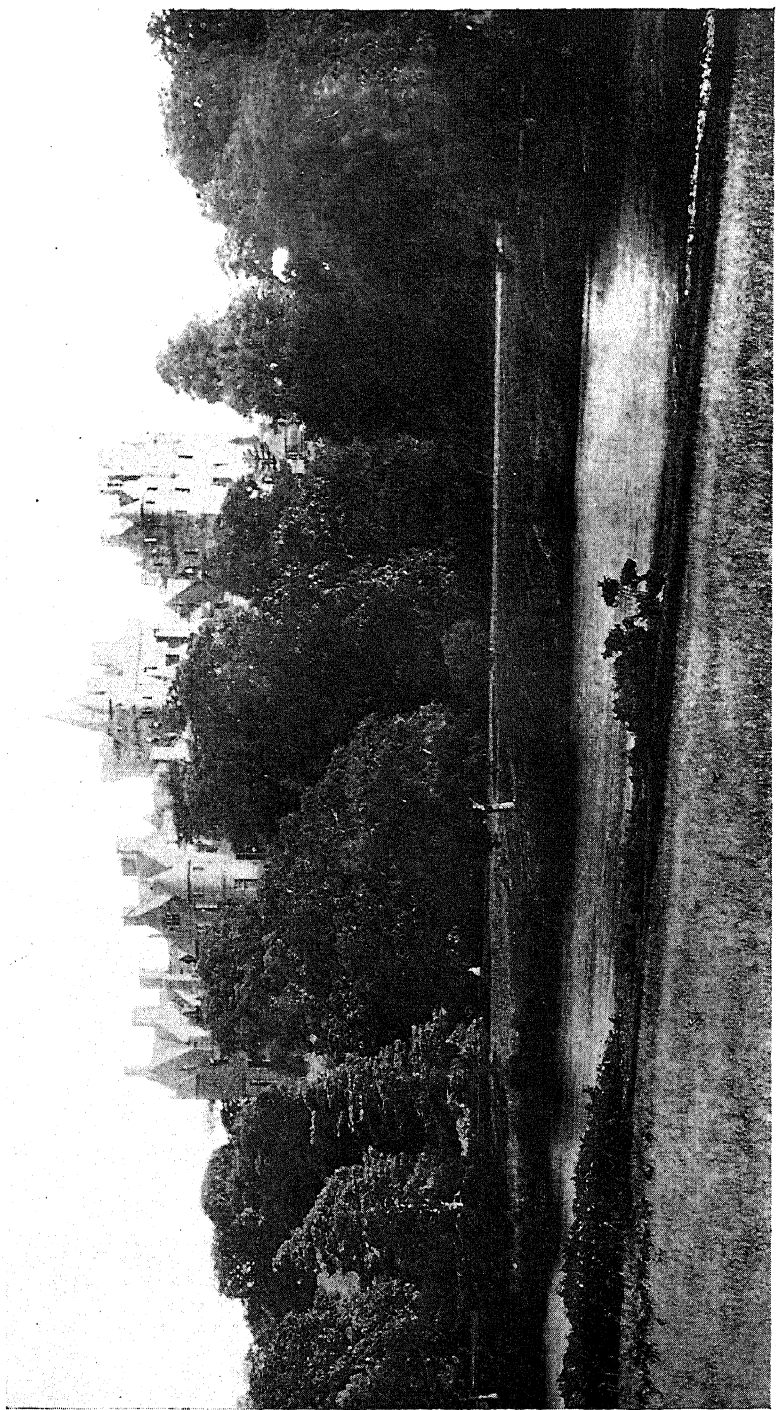
Although my admirers mustered in such numbers that there were at least three times as many persons outside the door as inside (including a don), I am credibly assured that if I had lectured in Brasenose my reception would have been still more overwhelming ; and I quite believe it. I was the more overcome, as I visited Magdalen under the impression that I was to pass a quiet hour chatting with a few friends, and had no idea until I arrived that I was expected to address a meeting, or that my advent had aroused so deep an interest.

Yours truly,

G. BERNARD SHAW."

It is interesting to speculate as to how many of the present Oxford Dons would be liable to be screwed up in their rooms if the undergraduates of 1892 were in residence.

It was while at Oxford that Lovat came of age. For five years his mother had nursed the estate with the one object of handing it over in as prosperous a condition as possible.



*Beaufort Castle*



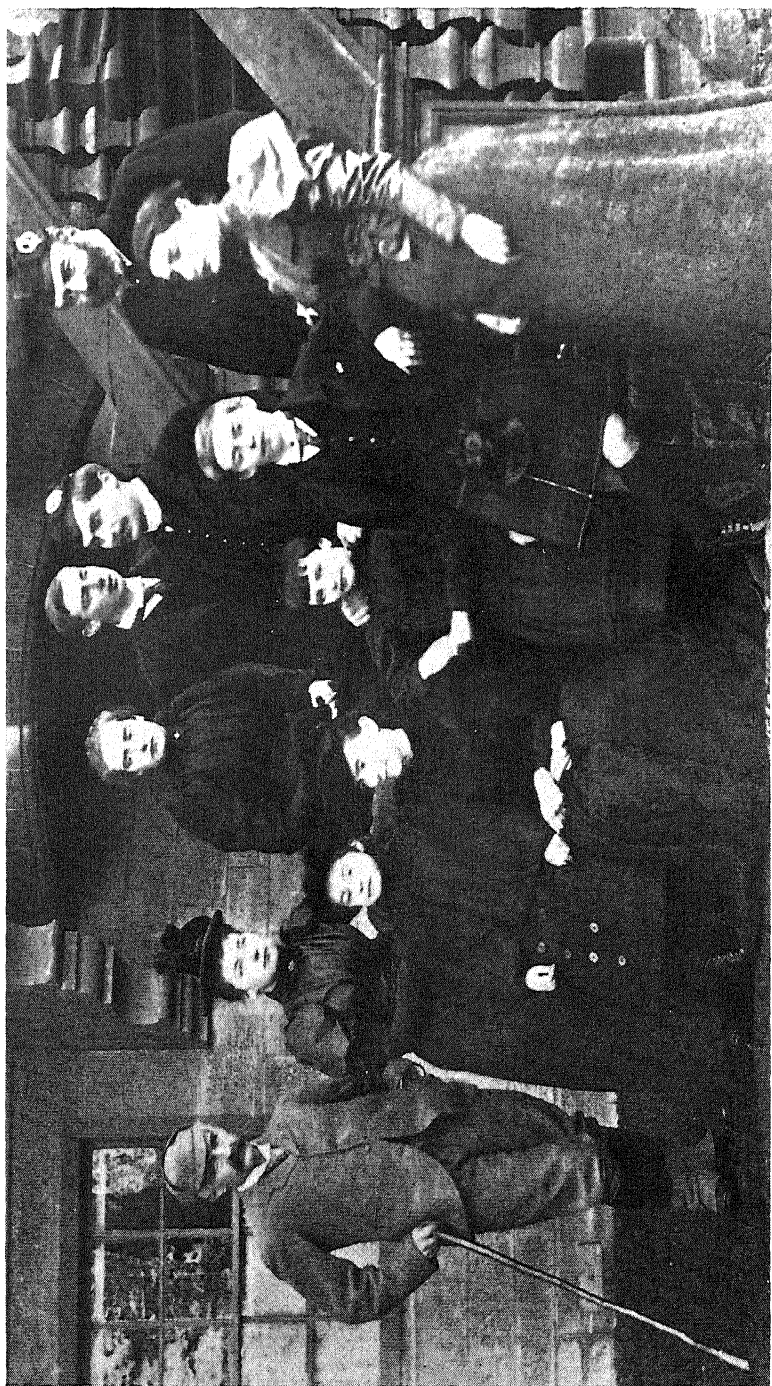
But the time was too short to pull round a property heavily mortgaged and burdened with an immense house. Hardly was Beaufort Castle finished when the owner died, and the widow found herself in a house, well built and solid, but scarcely fully furnished and huge beyond her requirements. Letting it in the autumn, she lived comfortably but frugally in one wing during the rest of the year. The property itself comprised some 250,000 acres, of which the larger part consisted of heather-clad hills of little grazing value and profitable only from the presence of grouse and deer. The estates stretched up the Beaully valley and Glenstrathfarrar to the top of Scaur na Lapich ; and further south and west they embraced the old Fraser country of Stratherrick and Fort Augustus and the isolated property of Morar on the west coast. There was also much good farm land in the famous Aird district round Beaully and extensive stretches of woodland planted by Lovat's grandfather and father, but sadly damaged in value by squirrels and deer. The woods were managed by a capable old forester, John Dewar ; and during Lovat's minority supplied Lady Lovat with the sinews of war. From boyhood he took a keen interest in them and regular planting replaced the cut timber. Another source of certain revenue was the salmon fishing which, as has been said, comprised the whole Beaully river and all its affluents, even those which did not flow through Lovat's land.

Most Highland properties are heavily mortgaged and many of their owners have had to establish their rights against some claimant. The Lovat Estate, as we have seen, was no exception ; and the mortgages, originating when it was handed back by the Crown and increased by the twelfth lord in order to make his great improvements, had later been swollen by a successful but serious lawsuit and by the building of Beaufort Castle till they amounted in 1892 to a very large sum. The outgoings were enormous. Not only had shooting lodges and cottages in remote districts to be kept in repair, but many miles of private roads had to be constructed and kept in order. There were scores of bridges on the estate and great was Lovat's dismay when telegram after telegram came in to him at Magdalen reporting in the winter of 1892 that one bridge after another had collapsed

before the greatest flood of the century. Hardly a bridge remained save the railway bridge in all the glen. Even the great stone bridge at Beaully went. Such was the estate to which, together with the old Scots barony, the U.K. peerage of 1837 and the Chiefship of the Clan Fraser Lovat succeeded on November 25th, 1892. It was an honourable but onerous inheritance ; and all his life it was his principal preoccupation to fulfil his duty by it.

The coming of age of a territorial magnate in the 'nineties of last century was always a notable event ; but nowhere was it quite so notable as when the young man was also a Highland Chief. The Pre, who always rose to an occasion such as this, readily gave Lovat leave to absent himself from Magdalen. The gathering was as representative as Lady Lovat could make it. The Duke of Norfolk, a distant kinsman, was there with Lords Herries and Southwell to represent the Catholic interest. Stourtons, Fitzherberts, Langdales and Throckmortons were amongst the close relations ; and the Highlands were richly represented by the Duke of Atholl, Lochiel, Mackintosh of Mackintosh, Lord Saltoun, Head of the rival Frasers of Aberdeenshire, Glenaladale, Lord Stormont and Lord Macdonald of the Isles. There were forty-six guests, including the family, staying in the house and over a hundred if all the dependents were counted. Shooting parties, sports and games filled the days ; and dancing, bonfires and other entertainments for the hundreds of tenants took up the evenings. It was then that Lovat was first seen at his best. Whether he was receiving deputations and addresses from his clansmen and tenants, looking after his guests or presiding over the sports and dances, his dignity, courtesy and good humour never failed him. Instinctively and unhesitatingly he struck the right note with all. Not one but recognized that here was a young man of rare quality and strength.

It is not surprising that, with his preoccupations at home and his endless activities and friendships at Oxford, Lovat's studies suffered. He was supposed to be reading for the Army and intended, like his two uncles, to go into the Scots Guards. But his tutors had an uphill task and Mr. Grundy still has lively recollections of his shortcomings. He, like all his other tutors, liked and admired him immensely and



*The family at Lovat's coming of age*





thought well of his abilities. But application was another matter. During the Easter vacation before his examination, he went to France to study the language. All through his life he was intensely interested in foreign countries and in foreigners ; and he shared to the full that tolerant amusement with which, in those days of British security and supremacy, most of us regarded people from other countries and their strange habits ; a letter to his eldest sister will illustrate his outlook and epistolary style.

“ MY DEAR M,

I am working like the Dickens at French and am making very good progress in the noble language. I can now speak it far better than I ever could German and my vocabulary is also much larger. The people here know very little English and as they talk like the deuce all day one soon knocks along.

The place is very dull and I am looking forward to my return to Oxford. Commem is on the Monday the 21st June, my Exam is 8 days later so I shall not be able to go about with you much. However, if my coach thinks that I am safe on my return from France I shall be able to knock off a bit for the last week. Bicycling is the great amusement here.

I went to hear a lecture on ‘ Contemporary Novelists,’ given by a Frenchman here. The good man appeared in vast gloves and perspired more than I have ever seen man perspire before. However, the lecture was good, and though the audience was unappreciative there were always storms of applause when *la belle France* was mentioned, a thing that occurred whenever the lecturer wished for time to mop his heated brow.

I consider, and hope you will take this to heart, that cheap sentiment, against which I have no doubt you have often heard me inveigh when posted on my native hearth-rug in Scotland, is one of the greatest points in the French character. I assure you I looked round the Theatre at one time yesterday and counted no less than seven Napoleons, that is to say, ones in the well-known attitude with the

short hair and anxious expression so well known in all pictures.

I remain,

Yours ever,

LOVAT."

It was no easy matter in those days to get into the infantry. Lovat was already a lieutenant in the Militia (Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders) which he had joined in 1889, but for commissions in the Regular Army competition was keen and most candidates had not only been well grounded at a Public School, but had also passed a considerable time at a crammer's. Lovat had neither of these advantages and he naturally failed in his examination. The cavalry was easier to enter and in 1894, soon after he went down, he joined the First Life Guards and another chapter in his life began. This is how the 1893 Eights week number of the *Oxford Magazine* closed this one :

" LORD LOVAT

*Magdalen College.*

The boldness of your signature is by no means in inverse ratio to your personal pluck. You are as little afraid of taking a regulation fence as you are of igniting a Catherine Wheel. Talking of wheels : beware of Lady Fortune's : the man who carries three trumps is often 'looad' for a pony. If you get as many 'runs' in the South as you have in your trout-streams in the North, you might sniff at 'lobs' and wear a 'speckled straw.' You are admirably qualified to command : and if a weight-carrier can be found, you should ride a colonel before you fight a light-weight. You are the best natured of men, and have all the dignified horror of 'a scene'—except after dinner. If you can keep your highland spirits corked tight till the end of term, you need not run over to Paris. You must avoid prejudice—especially against 'Golfers' and 'Freemasons.' Otherwise your character is 'good,' as they say at the agencies for maid-servants, and you might fill any situation, military or political, in the household of Britannia. But as to politics—

the toast of 'the lassies' at a Scotch dinner is not perhaps an adequate introduction into the world of oratory : you must not rest entirely on the laurels you then acquired. *En effet*, if you ride as straight through life as you do with the Bicester, you ought to do some good things and outstrip the field : it's better to aim at a million and miss by a unit, than make a century of ones."

## CHAPTER III

THE LIFE GUARDS. SPORT. TRAVELS IN ABYSSINIA.

1894-1899

TO his early friends there seemed something incongruous about Lovat being in the Life Guards, though his stature and appearance were suitable enough. No doubt many fine soldiers have served in that crack corps ; but the ceremonial nature of their duties, which keep them continually in London or at Windsor, was not such as either to attract or to satisfy his adventurous and versatile spirit. None the less he threw himself into his duties and his recreations with his usual ardour ; and his stay in the regiment, short though it was, left its influence on his subsequent career. Always a soldier at heart, it was with the First Life Guards that he learnt the groundwork of the profession and acquired his remarkable eye for detail. Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Gordon Carter, who was a brother officer, testifies to his being a very keen soldier who ought to have stayed on to command the regiment. He sent in his papers in 1897 ; partly, no doubt, in order to have more time to look after his estates, but mainly because he found the life unsatisfying.

His interest in people and his pleasure in being in company with others were amongst his strongest characteristics ; and during his three years in the Life Guards he made more friends even than he did at Oxford. Always on the look-out for promising young men, the Prince of Wales, later King Edward, soon noticed Lovat. His Royal Highness asked him frequently to Sandringham ; and on one occasion, during a hard winter, arranged an amusing hockey-match on the frozen lake in the grounds of Buckingham Palace in which Lovat took part. Loyal to the core, Lovat was





proud of the favour of King Edward whom he appreciated at his true worth as a King ; and it may without impropriety be mentioned here that he was even prouder of the friendship extended to him later by King George, whom he held in affection and deep esteem.

Lovat was the least censorious of men in private life, though quick enough to despise any falling away from his own high standard in public affairs. It was no use telling him some story of social back-sliding. He brushed it aside and was never heard himself to repeat anything of the kind. Some of his friends thought he carried his tolerance too far ; for it led him at times to associate in his amusements with people who, literally, were not fit to black his boots. He knew well that his taste for low company was a weakness and, not liking to be taken to task for it, would stick up for his doubtful acquaintances. But they left no taint on him ; nor did they diminish his pleasure in the society of men of mark. The temptations to which he was exposed during these years were indeed considerable to one of his ardent temperament ; and it is surprising that he successfully resisted the most dangerous of them. Gambling, as we have seen, had an early fascination for him ; and from time to time he would rush off to Monte Carlo and play extremely high. He was to be seen in February, 1897, with maximums on two *trente-et-quarante* tables at the same time. His companion and he stuffed their pockets full of the notes he had won and ran across to the Hôtel de Paris to lodge them with the concierge. There was over two thousand pounds and word must have been passed round to the waiters ; for nothing was good enough to give the pair during the rest of their stay at the hotel. If they ordered a cigar, a Havana like a bowsprit was produced and no wine except the most expensive was offered to them. The friend left for the heights of St. Moritz after four days, having lost more than he wanted. Lovat stayed longer and characteristically paid the bill. The sequel to this trip is told in a letter to his eldest sister.



LORD LOVAT

[1894-1899]

“CAVALRY BARRACKS,  
WINDSOR.

MY DEAR MAYMIE,

I have told the Bank of Scotland to put £100 to your credit and the same to Ethel's. You can easily imagine the reason. My success at Monte was phenomenal. I amassed the sum of slightly over £3250 after paying all expenses and sending back the money I went out with.

I am not sure yet how I shall spend the bulk of the money but have ordered two of the best polo ponies in England and intend getting a horse or two for regimental races.

I rather think a motor car to hold four people and luggage would not be a bad idea for Killin. This would cost about £400 and would save a lot of bother in sending for luggage, etc., besides being a tremendous saving of time. We could go up to the Lodge in an hour from the boat and back again in even less time.

Yrs. ever,  
LOVAT.

Just off to Kingston. I did nothing else at Monte and spent most of my time in the rooms.

L.”

The letter is not dated, but must have been written early in 1897 when motor-cars had hardly been heard of. He did not actually get one until 1902 when he acquired a Panhard, one of the first, if not actually the first, seen in the Highlands. With its occupants exposed to all the blasts of heaven, it was for years familiar to the neighbourhood as the “little Panner.” This was not his only visit to Monte Carlo, nor was his gambling confined to that port. Not to mention betting, there was an annual contest at *ecarté* between White's Club and the St. James Club. Lovat took part in several of these battles, which amused him the more in that the St. James was represented mainly by foreign diplomats whose peculiarities delighted him. He would recount with gusto the incidents of the evening and how White's, of which he was a member, got the better of the wily foreigners. Large sums passed; and Prince Mirski,

of the Russian Embassy, had a *mauvais quart d'heure* with his chief, Count Benckendorff, after one of these bouts.

A cavalry regiment naturally encouraged his taste for riding and he did most of his hunting and rode in many point-to-point races during this period. Perhaps the most important was in 1894 just after he joined. The story can best be told in his own words to his sister, Mrs. Bernard Maxwell.

“ REGENT’S PARK BARRACKS,  
N.W.

5/94.

MY DEAR LAMB,

I write to wish you many more happy birthdays.

I went home on Saturday to have a look at the family and found them all fit and well.

The Cornler has caught 3 fish and seems to be sticking to it well.

The great event since I saw you was *the* Point to Point last Friday. There were 36 entries for it and as it was open to the whole Army the 17 horses that went to the post were practically the best heavy weight hunters in England. I sent Halma to Chants to be trained 10 days before the race. The course was chosen close to the Seymours so I went down to stay with them for it. The race was a most exciting one throughout. The course was 4 miles in the cream of the Quorn country.

We got a good start and all charged down in line at the first fence. Halma (in a double snaffle) was pulling like blazes, but she steadied beautifully at the fence and jumped long out into the next field giving me a lead of a couple of lengths.

The first 4 fences were easy ones and every one rode their own places at them and it was an awfully pretty sight seeing them go like a regiment of cavalry almost exactly in line.

At about the fifth fence the ground sloped up over a stiffish ridge and furrow and I took a good pull at Halma and allowed about a dozen to get ahead of me. A couple of stiffish fences took us to the top of the hill.

Once on the sky line we saw the white tents and the winning posts about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles off on the far side of the Belvoir vale. Down the hill we went like blazes into the vale. A whacking big fence stood at the bottom with a post and rails just opposite me. The horses, most of them rather out of hand, came swinging down on it. The rails looked the best place and I thought they looked weak, so did the mare, and she never rose an inch. There was a loud crash, a pull, and I was over in safety.

I looked round, the two top bars were gone, the leaders on my right and left were down and the remaining field were making for my gap.

The field were now fairly spreadeagled and I had a clear lead, about a hundred yards away on my right I saw that Shaftesbury and Hoare (the winner) had got good places.

Like this we ran for the remainder of the race. Halma jumping beautifully, hardly touching a twig over the biggest fence.

I jumped into the last field with a lead of 5 lengths, the run in was 200 yards up hill and the mare (only half-trained as she was) went to pieces.

Slowly and surely Hoare and Shaftesbury crept up and just beat me on the post by a length and half a length respectively.

Lady Seymour as you may imagine was wild with excitement. She of course knew my colours; and as she saw me jumping each fence with a clear lead she thought that the Prince of Wales Cup would be certain to find its way back to Burton. Notwithstanding my defeat I am more than satisfied with the mare. The other two horses were really first rate performers and had been trained for weeks before the race. Moreover the riders both ride races, and could ride a finish which I could not. Added to this I carried three pound overweight. Any one of these things would be enough to make the difference of one length in a four mile race.

As third I get half of the stake which is about £15, so that I shall have received a certain amount of my £20 back in specie.

Love to Bernard<sup>1</sup> and tell him I will put on a fiver for him when I run at Hawthorn Hill.

Yrs. ever,  
LOVAT.

Halma's engagements are 20th Regimental Point to Point.

2nd April Subs Cup.

3rd April Regimental Race.

Later in April Aylesbury Heavy Weight Hunt Race."

A heavy man and a bold rider, he experienced some nasty falls and several bad concussions which finally put an end both to his hunting and his polo. Riding at Aylesbury in a point-to-point he lost one of the best horses he ever had, which broke her back under him; and at the Regimental Races at Hawthorn Hill he had a particularly bad fall on his head. He never became what is called a finished horseman; but, when hunting at Melton, Lord Lonsdale, one of the finest judges in England, said he had the quickest eye for a country of any man hunting from that famous centre. His interest in horses led naturally to racing and Lovat dearly loved a race-meeting all his life. He had a few horses in training from time to time, but none of any note. It was the excitement which attracted him to an amusement which was, except for that element, at odds with the rest of his character. For he never cared for watching any game; and used to say that he would sooner play in the poorest football or cricket match rather than look on at the best.

If Lovat suffered from lack of early tuition both in work and games it was very different with stalking, shooting and salmon-fishing. Accustomed from his earliest youth to the hill, he was not only a very fine rifle shot, but had a phenomenal gift for judging ground and foreseeing the movements of deer. No exertion was too great for him and no day too long; and at the great deer drives at Glen Quoich, organized by the late Lord Burton for the Prince of Wales (later King Edward), he was more than once a guest and distinguished

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Bernard Maxwell.

himself in posts which demanded all his activity and knowledge of the craft. Before he went to Oxford he took part in an unusual incident in his own forest of Glendoe. He was stalking some stags and was about to fire at a good beast when a shot rang out from another quarter and a young stag rolled over. Lovat could not resist firing at the big stag and killed it as it galloped off. This revealed his presence to the rival party of poachers who took to their heels and escaped after a long chase. As a young man he was a fine shot with a gun and in maturity he became one of the very best in the Kingdom. He was always fond of shooting, though he gave but little time to it after 1914. At his own shoots, the sport of his guests and the organization of the day occupied all his attention and he was never at his best with the gun. His best moor, Killin, later incorporated into Stronelairst, was a hard one to walk and a difficult one to drive ; and endless were the experiments he made. He was never satisfied that he had found the best way of burning the heather, draining the ground or laying out the drives. It was the same at Beaufort where, one year, he had boats anchored in the river to give the guns more testing shots at the pheasants soaring over from the high bank above. If one of his experimental drives at Stronelairst failed, he was the butt of much chaff from the guns when they emerged from their comfortless hiding-places in wet peat hags or in burns. He gave as good as he got and scolded them for mere shooters, who wanted to sit in arm-chairs and smoke cigars whilst the grouse were driven over them. In early days at Killin his sisters were ordered to act as stops and flankers, and very effective they were under his guidance and authority. The success of a drive depends on the stops and flankers and Lovat always placed them himself. In the last years of his life he would go full speed from the bottom of Glenmarkie to the very skyline and back to place them. It was no use trying to stop him though all knew he was not fit for such heavy exertion. His nature forced him to give of his best.

In all amusements worthy of the name there is an element of seriousness, and grouse driving is no exception. Lovat watched over the proceedings with an eye which nothing escaped ; and if some inexperienced or unwary guest

jeopardized, or actually marred, the success of a drive, he had a characteristic way of preventing a recurrence of the mistake. He swore roundly at his youngest brother, Alastair Fraser, in the hearing of the real culprit ; or, if Alastair was not there, he chose some other near relative. Alastair knew the game, but his substitute was not always so lucky ; and the delinquent would profit by listening to a lively altercation. Regular shooting-men know that sinking feeling on seeing gun after gun arrive when already it is apparent that there are too many for a good day's sport. Lovat's hospitality knew no bounds and he could never resist asking friends to shoot if he came across them. The result was sometimes a company out of all proportion to the game to be seen. Such parties were always a success. The actual shooting, or rather the want of it, was forgotten in the pleasure of a day on the hill and in the lodge with Lovat. Occasionally some of the guests liked high play ; and at the end of one such party Lovat was the only big winner. One of the guests, himself unnoticed, remembers seeing him standing before the fire and receiving the loser's cheques, which he quietly tore in pieces behind his kilt and dropped into the flames.

When staying away from home, he had none of the cares of a host and could devote himself wholeheartedly to the pleasures of the sport and of the company. He liked big shoots ; and excelled most when birds came thickest, fastest and highest—just when lesser men begin to falter and get flurried. At Warter Priory, reputed then to afford the highest pheasants in England, he proved himself the equal of that select band of men, of whom he was never one, who may be called professional shooters. Men who did nothing but shoot from August 12th to February 1st, and then, as often as not, kept themselves in practice at Monte Carlo or some other foreign resort. It was at Sandringham that Lovat got ninety-eight partridges in one drive—a record for England which still stands. This was with King Edward, who never approached King George as a marksman ; but who, so Lovat used to tell, had a knack of bringing down most difficult birds unexpectedly. There was one particular shot just behind his left shoulder of which His late Majesty was a master.

It has often surprised observers that quite a number of good shots are jealous and greedy ones as well. Not content with their skill which ensures their getting more than their share of the bag, they must needs shoot birds properly left to their neighbours and pick up others to which they have no rightful claim. Such practices annoy most victims of them, but they never ruffled Lovat. They caused him genuine amusement and added to the enjoyment of his day. He himself was the most generous of shooters ; claiming nothing which was not obviously his and enjoying the success of others fully as much as his own. To youthful sportsmen he was a mentor and a guide, treating them as equals and putting his unrivalled zest and enthusiasm into his advice. He liked big days mainly because he always tried to put as much as possible into the twenty-four hours ; but, if a small day came his way, he threw himself into it with the same gusto. And here may appropriately be quoted an appreciation by the Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Acland at the end of a letter on the subject of forestry : " One last memory and how I wish I could remember more. During the time we were working so closely together he came down to stay with me in Devon, and I took him out shooting with some tenants, one of whom provided some old bottle cider of his making for lunch. I sent Lovat to walk with the beaters on the first beat after lunch, and he came back radiant saying he'd never enjoyed himself so much in his life, for he had missed eleven pheasants running. As a testimony to his usual marksmanship and to the essential harmlessness of our local beverage I must recall that for the rest of the afternoon he hit everything. How he combined, right through every action of his that I knew, a great conscientious seriousness of purpose with the spirit of a boy—'loving' in the words of a song 'the ally with the heart of a brother, hating the foe with a playing at hate.' It was a most inspiring mixture of qualities. For many years he was my mental hero, and if I ever came across some bit of good dexterous work that helped things forward it was with the thought 'How this would please Lovat.' "

No wonder he was a welcome guest wherever he went.

After his fall at Hawthorn Hill in 1897 he was ordered a complete rest and went to South Africa for the sake of the

trip. This was his first journey outside Europe and unfortunately we have practically no idea of what he did during it. We may be sure that he saw a great many people and formed opinions on a number of subjects. But the one letter which can be found speaks of only two serious subjects : the possibility of settling his younger brother Alastair Fraser on a farm and the question of war. The letter was written to his mother :

“ THE UNION STEAM SHIP COMPANY, LIMITED,  
TWIN-SCREW R.M.S. ‘NORMAN,’

PORT ELIZABETH,

1897

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

We arrived here the day before yesterday after quiet voyage from Cape only disturbed by a large flock of whales, two sharks, and a row amongst some of the passengers in the smoking room.

The latter incident was most amusing. It arose from two Jews quarrelling about some coppers in a game of nap. A scuffle occurred, then their respective friends intervened and separated them. At a distance of ten feet or so they stormed and abused each other, and threats of the worst kind were exchanged ; they struggled to get loose to get at each other, but were held tight by their affectionate relatives. When the storm of threats was at its height, Dan Stanhope stepped to the front and remarked : ‘ Let the brutes go. They’re far too frightened of one another to hurt themselves.’ This was done ; and the beggars who had been straining like hounds on a leash to get at each other’s throats quietly sat down and the fracas was over : their courage vanished with their liberty.

To-day we had a fish and caught *one ton and a half* of sea fish ; fair legitimate line fishing. We chartered a tug for a fiver and caught 475 fish averaging 8 lbs. and running from 37 lbs. to 2½ lbs. We steamed about 14 miles out to a reef, began at 11.30 and had 300 on board by 1. They were feeding about 100 ft. deep and we just pulled them up as



quick as the line could rise. The big fish pulled like anything. The bag for the game book is :

Kilback	.	.	.	.	12
Roman	.	.	.	.	1
Dailahead	.	.	.	.	5
Miss Lucy or Silver	.	.	.	.	67
Pusscoke	.	.	.	.	1
Carpenter	.	.	.	.	389
Total					<hr/> 475 <hr/>

David Campbell hooked a shark after lunch and we lost a lot of time after a whale which turned out to be what the natives call a Hump Back and valueless.

Yesterday I went on shore to look after Mouilly's<sup>1</sup> interests in the stamp line. I got about 70 different sorts of S.A. stamps, but whether good or bad I have not the least idea.

With regard to Alastair and South Africa, should it come to anything as we discussed before leaving I have been making enquiries about farms up Bulawayo way. We had several Chartered Company Officials on board, two of whom I knew before, and one at all events I could rely on from previous acquaintance although both are leading men out here. My views are these :

There will be no war in the Transvaal. Moving of ships to Delagoa and troops to Ladysmith have taken all fight out of Dutch. Kruger is not likely to alter his policy towards the Uitlanders quickly and therefore English money is bound to be deflected from Transvaal.

Now at Bulawayo gold is being found and more important the railway reaches in six months. Now land can be got for Farms at £100 per 1000 acres in the immediate vicinity of Bulawayo. This, if worth the money a year ago when there was no railway, must be worth it now that there shortly will be one. I am therefore making negotiations about the purchase of a Farm of about 5000 acres which I can get reserved by the interest I can put in the Chartered Company ; and on my return to England can settle the matter or not

<sup>1</sup> His sister the Hon. Muriel Fraser.

as may turn out. In any case I am only liable for the engineer and experts fee, which, as I am determined not to employ Company Officials, will be about £50. Should this scheme come to anything, it will be an opening for Alastair should he want such employment, and it comes out of Monte C. money. It is the healthiest part of S.A. and game is still plentiful within a short distance.

Yrs. ever, L."

The "game-book" mentioned in connection with the catch of fish was an institution at Beaufort. Carefully kept by his eldest sister and beautifully illustrated, it contained the record of all the bags of game and catches of fish made by members of the family. After Lady Encombe's marriage in 1898, the book was no longer kept up-to-date and it remains a testimony to a past epoch. The money won at Monte Carlo figured fairly often at this period in Lovat's plans. None of it was spent on a farm in South Africa, but not a little went to improve farms nearer home.

After an autumn in England, he set out for the Continent at the beginning of 1898. A letter to his sister, Mrs. Bernard Maxwell, from St. Petersburg, shows him in the novel and, it must be admitted, uncharacteristic, part of the art student.

" BRITISH EMBASSY,  
ST. PETERSBURG,

24.

MY DEAR LAMB,

I arrived here safe and well Monday. Spent three days in Berlin. Thoroughly overhauled the Bild Museum and the Egyptian side and saw the principal sights. I never realized that a large and mixed acquaintance was so useful as during the last fortnight: have been most lucky in finding practically all the Embassy at both places known to me, and on each occasion of a long journey at least one acquaintance.

The Neva is still frozen and the thermometer at zero all night and most of the day. The O'Connor's are most kind

and look after one just sufficiently to let one thoroughly amuse oneself.

I get to the Hermitage most mornings to inspect the pictures. I had no idea it was such a wonderful collection. I have only got through the Flemish and Netherland school and they simply have dozens of Rubens, Rembrandts, Van Dycks, Wouvermans, Kauffmans, Van der Veldts, etc. etc. Sleighing is delightful ; the two horses galloping and one trotting really exist.

In the afternoon we sleigh out to the toboggan slides or some other place and have great fun. Lots of entertainment at night and I have got most of the information I want.

Yrs. sincerely,  
LOVAT."

Mrs. Maxwell was fond of Art and Lovat always saw all he could of everything when he travelled ; but neither his artistic nor his literary tastes were strongly developed. For the moment he would be deeply interested in anything he was looking at ; but his interest faded unless the subject was one which really appealed to him. Of such subjects the number was enormous, but neither works of art nor objects of beauty in general were amongst them. The serious object of his visit to Petersburg, to which allusion is made in the last sentence of the letter, must remain a matter of conjecture. It was probably connected with Russian military preparations.

During the autumn at home Lovat was planning a second and very different journey in Africa. His uncle, Mr. Herbert Weld-Blundell, later Mr. Herbert Weld of Lulworth Castle, was a traveller to whom most of Asia and Africa was already known. A student of antiquities, modern languages, strange tribes and human nature in general, he was a man of quite exceptional versatility of mind. He had a number of inventions to his credit ; but neither "Sparklets" nor Plasmon biscuits ever swelled his balance at the Bank. The folding camera, of which he was the first to think, should have been a gold mine and possibly proved one to someone else.

In the Libyan desert he had combined the parts of antiquary and unofficial Secret Service Agent in a district then unknown to any white man. Later he was correspondent

for the *Morning Post* during the South African War and spent years compiling a monumental work on the Amharic language for which feat he was awarded a complimentary Fellowship at Queen's College, Oxford. Periods of complete penury alternated with times of affluence, but neither the one nor the other affected his health or spirits. Late in life he became a rich man, financed scientific excavations in Mesopotamia, and obtained one of his life's ambitions by winning the King's Cup at Cowes with his yacht *Lulworth*. Even then his fortunes were not assured; for he lost his young wife soon after his marriage at the age of seventy and saw his splendid house, Lulworth Castle, burned before his eyes. Interested in every aspect of human life and attracted by every novelty, "Herbie," as he was known to his nephews and nieces, was free from prejudices or pre-conceptions of any kind. He was, in short, what was once called a "most ingenious man."

Accompanied by this relative and by a taxidermist, Mr. Hardwood, and a doctor geologist, Lovat set out from Berbera for Abyssinia in December, 1898. An African trip was at that time almost as much part of a young man's education as was the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century; but, though the sport was a great attraction, the objects of the expedition extended to mapping new country, collecting ornithological and other specimens and interviewing the Emperor Menelek. Returning from a punitive expedition, His Majesty was encamped at Borumeda in the midst of his army. The travellers stayed a week at the Imperial Court and were granted three audiences. They were greatly impressed with the personality of the Maker of Modern Abyssinia, with the reforms he had introduced and with his attempts to mitigate the savagery of his subjects.

Unfortunately they did not gain access to his remarkable Consort, the Empress Tito, whose anti-foreign sentiments were as marked as was her expansive temperament which her four successive husbands had neither satisfied nor tamed. She would take her Master of the Ceremonies by the beard and keep her attendants up till three o'clock in the morning whilst she prayed in her chapel. After receiving high Abyssinian decorations, the party left without bestowing on the Emperor a piece of silver-gilt plate—a gigantic vine-

leaf supported by four hares rampant—brought out for the occasion. It was discovered that it would be melted down and its true composition (silver and not gold) revealed in the process. Whether Lovat ever wore the Life Guard's cuirass and the kilt which he had with him as a combination likely to impress the Court of the Lion of Judah will never be known.

Early in March the party entered upon the practically unknown part of their journey ; and it was not long after they had started that they found out, what everyone in the town but themselves knew, that their porters and mule drivers, frightened at the prospect before them, meant to leave in a body at the first opportunity. The second day out, one of the porters gave them a warning and Lovat at once called the men together and harangued them, whilst his uncle and the reliable Sudanese quietly drove the ring-leaders out of camp. When Lovat's meeting broke up, the malcontents were without their leaders and, after another dangerous man had been turned out of camp, the expedition had no more trouble. Moving westward, and gradually descending in altitude, it was decided to drop into the true elephant country where the first ten days produced only one large bull shot by Mr. Weld-Blundell. They then separated in order to explore more country, and Lovat started up the Dabous river along the elephant roads which afforded the only highway through the thick bamboo jungle. There is no sport so dangerous as shooting elephants in such country and I cannot do better than leave Lovat to describe a day in his own words as they appeared in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* in 1899. For the sake of the uninitiated it should be explained that wild elephants, though their sight is poor and indiscriminating, have a keen sense of smell on which they rely to detect their enemies.

“At 6 a.m. we finally got under way and after two hours' march got into what we considered the elephant country. While following down an elephant road in single file, a rock rabbit of a new kind appeared and on pulling up the pony to examine it with my telescope we heard in the silence of the jungle the crack of bending bamboo and the resultant swish as it was released. ‘Zonon,’ ‘Viel,’ ‘Elephant,’ ‘Nazri’ each one exclaimed in his own language. There was

no doubt who looked the most frightened. Therefore Hailomarion, the Abyssinian, was told off to look after the pony and mule, the Galla was handed the .577 whilst I, eight bore in hand, drove the local expert in front of me.

"Zuzu led on the party through the thick bamboo with the greatest nonchalance, turning round to grin out of sheer friendliness whenever an elephant broke down an unusually large tree as he fed. Gradually the noises became more distinct, and it became evident that Zuzu was holding off a bit from the herd towards some high trees dangerously near the wind. Remonstrance in dumb show is not convincing, and Zuzu answered me in return in the politest possible manner that all was well. So it was, but for Zuzu only; for the wily native on reaching the clump of cedars, with the greatest care selected the largest and thickest and safely ensconcing himself in the highest branches, with dazzling smiles urged us to 'Go in and win.'

"An uphill stalk at a herd of elephants with a side wind and doubtful gun-bearer is exciting work, and so the sequel proved. The ravine up which we had to make our way was thick with crackling leaves and so slippery as to necessitate the use of hands and knees. In the still jungle the noise we made seemed enormous and it was only the steady crunching noise we heard over the bank that gave us confidence to proceed. Slowly we wended our way up the bank, the back of a cow elephant in sight and the old male about forty yards over the brow, its whereabouts shown by the shaking of the bamboo heads. On reaching the ridge the first thing to meet the eye was the male lurching towards us. He had seen nothing, but was suspicious, and for fully two minutes his beady little eyes were fixed on mine. The great brute assured himself that the object of his suspicions did not move. He returned to his bamboo and went on with his meal. Now came the time for action, and gripping hold of the Galla to make sure of his keeping close to me, I slipped behind a favouring bamboo clump and got into range. The elephant was standing end on, with stern towards us, then suddenly without a moment's notice he whipped round and stood facing us, and I realized for the first time that he was only twenty yards off. It was an anxious moment. To shoot with effect was impossible from the position in which he

stood. He was now thoroughly alarmed and it was necessary to act quickly. Fortunately for us he had not made out our exact whereabouts and before he did so I determined to slip round our bamboo clump and get him in flank. The manœuvre stealthily executed was successful—the elephant still looked in the direction of where we had been and taking steady aim I planted the bullet in the exact line between eye and ear. Down he went with a crash and for a moment lay still. The other elephants, eight in number, dashed off down the wind, two young ones almost knocking us over in their excitement to join the herd. I ran on thirty yards to see if there was anything worth shooting, when a shout from the Galla made me turn in time to see our friend struggling to get on to his legs. For several minutes the enormous animal rolled backwards and forwards like a horse cast in a bog. I had exchanged my eight bore for the .577 and had approached within ten yards to deliver a shot at close quarters when suddenly he rolled on to his feet and jumping into his stride like a five furlong sprinter he bore down on me. I fired the .577 with no overdue deliberation and through the smoke saw that he was still coming on. My first three strides were panic pure and simple, the next three put me behind a bamboo patch. I cocked the second barrel as I ran and whipped round. The elephant had got the second bullet low in the centre of the forehead and was now standing rocking backwards and forwards over the place where I had lately stood. My Galla had taken to the hill, carrying off the eight bore and I was left in a quandary not caring to close with the .577. The Galla's panic was short-lived, a glance over his shoulder showed the situation was less grave than he had anticipated, he ran back, put the big gun in my hand and a steadily delivered shot ended the battle. The ponies now came up, accompanied by Zuzu, and we had begun to look at the tusks and size of feet when a cow elephant that had lost her calf walked by. The Abyssinian fled precipitately, but the Galla coolly handed me my .577 and I brought her down by a shot, one inch from the ear-hole.

“Our day's sport was not over ; on our way to the river we came across the tracks of a large herd, and after some rather interesting tracking on stony ground, got in at twelve

noon. At this hour the African elephant usually takes a siesta, but this herd of thirty-five must have got a touch of the wind and when we came in sight were on the 'qui vive.' The Galla and I attacked this time from above; the elephants advanced diagonally across the ground and I was able to get a nice shot at the male and dropped him in his tracks. To my horror the cow that was in the lead charged, but I was lucky enough to turn her off with my left barrel, while the .577 quickly handed by the Galla finished her off as she went by. The rest of the herd then bolted and the male who had got on to his legs made a blundering attempt to come at us. There was plenty of time to re-charge the eight bore and a shot at close quarters effectually stopped him. This, by the way, was the only instance in our trip of a charging elephant killed by a frontal shot. A satisfactory day was concluded by securing a yellow and green bird of the *Silviadæ* order previously unknown."

The first week in May the two travellers rejoined the main caravan and made for Beni Shongul, through country recently traversed by Damasi's Army, which, though in friendly territory, had left behind it the usual Abyssinian trail of devastated villages and ruined *dhurra* fields. At Beni Shongul the caravan was paid off and sixty miles in intense heat brought the reduced party to Famaka, the furthest British outpost on the Blue Nile. Early in June Khartoum was reached after six months in the wilds. The expedition had been a success and Lovat had gained experience of much value to him later. Whether due to his trick of unconsciously catching idiosyncrasies of speech—a trick which caused him even to drop half his aitches after entertaining for a week a guest without any aspirates at his command—or whether it was due to his knowledge of Gaelic, which he often heard at home, or merely to his Highland intuition, he had a great faculty for picking up quickly a foreign language sufficiently for everyday purposes. In this he resembled those members of the less highly educated classes who, whilst their masters, after laborious study in a book, are inarticulate and unable to understand a word, have no difficulty in getting all they want out of the inhabitants of a foreign country. This facility in the vernacular was of great use to him during the whole expedition



and served him well in other countries later. But he took risks with his health on this trip and laid the seeds of serious later weaknesses. His indifference to ordinary comfort never failed to astonish his friends, especially those who hailed from south of the Tweed, and experience had not yet taught him that it was impossible with impunity to exert oneself in tropical Africa as one would at home. For considerable periods he was alone and did his own skinning of specimens at the end of a hard day's march. Although 1898 was far removed from the time of the pioneer hunters such as Gordon Cumming with their muzzle loaders and biltong, it is still further from to-day with its small-bore repeating rifles and easily portable and digestible foods. To walk all day with an eight-bore rifle or a double .577 along an elephant path is very different from jumping out of a Ford car with a .303 and having a few hours sport before returning to camp.

On his return to London, a private exhibition of the birds and mammals was held at the Natural History Museum Hall of the British Museum ; and Mr. W. Ogilvie-Grant, Assistant Keeper of the Bird Room, later described the collection, which was presented to the Museum, in the *Ibis* (Vol. VI, 7th Series, 1900). I cannot do better than quote the salient passages :

“ Few African expeditions of recent years have found more interesting, or have led to more important scientific results, than the adventurous journey lately undertaken by Mr. Weld-Blundell and Lord Lovat.

Starting from Berbera on December 11th, 1898, they proceeded in a westerly direction through Northern Somaliland and the North Galla country arriving at Addis Abeba towards the end of January. Thence they proceeded northwards through Shoa as far as Lake Haik to pay their respects to the Emperor Meneleh.

Mr. Weld-Blundell having on a previous occasion visited Abyssinia and established the most friendly terms with His Majesty, the party was received with the utmost cordiality and courtesy, and every assistance was offered in traversing the unexplored part of the country to the west.

Returning through Shoa, they followed the Djemime

Valley, arriving near Addis Abeba towards the end of February. Thence they marched in a westerly direction and striking the Blue Nile at Famaka followed its course to Roseires, which was reached on May 19th.

Mr. Harwood, who had already had much experience and done excellent work for Mr. E. Lort Phillips and Mr. R. M. D. Hawker on previous trips to Somaliland, accompanied the expedition as Naturalist; and his ability as a field collector and taxidermist, as well as his skill in managing the native transport and his unvarying cheerfulness in meeting all difficulties, have won the highest praise from the leaders of the expedition.

The zoological results consist almost entirely of mammals and of birds. (The former are described later.) But the great feature of the collection is the birds. These are of exceptional interest, for among the 523 specimens brought home no fewer than 303 species are represented. At least sixteen of them are new, and include such fine birds as *Oriolus*, *Meneliki*, *Indicator Lovati*, *Caprimulgus Stellatus*, *Lisotis Lovati*, *Francolinus Tetraoninus* and *Francolinus Harwoodi*; while several are species described by Ruppell which have never been seen in this country and are mostly known in Europe only from the types in the Frankfurt Museum. Besides these, there are a number of rare species hitherto only recognized as inhabiting Eastern and Equatorial Africa which have never been met with in Southern Abyssinia; an extension of their geographical range which is extremely interesting and worthy of special remark.

Descriptions of eleven of the new species have already been published by Mr. Weld-Blundell and Lord Lovat in the Bulletin of the British Ornithological Club and five more are described in the present paper, making a total of sixteen novelties discovered during this expedition.

Almost the whole of the birds were shot by Lord Lovat himself who, though he had never made a special study of ornithology, has shown us what a thoroughly good sportsman accustomed to use his eyes in the field may accomplish. We may mention incidentally that, owing to 1000 cartridges for the collecting gun having gone astray and been lost, only 400 were available for this indispensable little weapon. Every shot, therefore, had to be considered, and not simply

thrown away on common birds already in the collection. With the aid of a powerful stalking-glass, and with the quickness which is only acquired by constant use, Lord Lovat was able carefully to examine the great majority of the birds before shooting them and thus obtain the extraordinarily large proportion of different species compared with the number killed.

When we consider that the specimens had generally to be prepared after a long day's march and packed up before they were properly dry, their fine condition reflects the greatest credit on those concerned.

Mr. Weld-Blundell and Lord Lovat have presented the greater part of this grand collection to the British Museum, thus adding, not only sixteen new species to the collection, but supplying examples of ten known species which had hitherto been wanting to our series. . . . The route followed by the travellers was, far more than 300 miles, through country the zoology of which had never previously been explored.

Mr. Weld-Blundell's time was almost entirely occupied by making a map of the country traversed and the results of his work will shortly be published."

The collection of twenty-five species of small mammals was described by Mr. W. E. de Winton, F.Z.S., in the proceedings of the Zoological Society of London. There was only one species new to science, *Dendromys Lovati*, a kind of rat. One other species of rat was new to the collection and, of a third species, the Museum had only one specimen. The game animals included elephants, lions, cervals, wart-hogs, all the antelopes known to inhabit the region and one never before found in the valley of the Blue Nile. All the small mammals and the more interesting of the antelopes were presented to the Museum.

## CHAPTER IV

THE RAISING OF THE LOVAT SCOUTS. THEIR SHARE IN THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

1899-1902

**B**Y the time Lovat returned from Abyssinia, the long quarrel with the Transvaal Government was coming to a head. His recent visit to South Africa had roused his latent passion for the Empire and given him a personal interest in South African politics. He condemned the Jamieson Raid as responsible for throwing the Dutch population into the arms of President Kruger ; and he maintained that the Cape Dutch, exasperated by Kruger's policy of closing the Drifts, would, but for the criminal folly of the Raid, have remained loyal to His Majesty's Government. The whole story has been told again and again ; and it is sufficient here to say that President Kruger, confident in the support of the Dutch and relying on the precedent of Majuba, followed up his ultimatum of October 9th, 1899, by the invasion of British territory. Before the end of the year our forces had been defeated both in Natal and in Cape Colony ; and Ladysmith was closely invested.

These reverses caused consternation at home and revealed to the public the fact that we had not a friend abroad—always excepting, and it turned out a most important exception, the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria. Thus the opportunity for which Lovat's life and experience had been a preparation had come, and he seized it with both hands. Knowing the weak points of the British Army and its leaders, he noticed that many of our worst disasters were due to lack of reconnaissance ; in other words to avoidable surprise. The defeat at Colenso, for instance, where the movements of the British Army violated every rule for

attack taught at the Staff College or by ordinary common sense, could only be explained on the supposition that General Buller and his Staff did not believe that the position on the Tugela was actually held by the Boers. And stories were constantly coming home of the impossibility of seeing the Boers. Lovat had no more belief in the invisibility of Boers in open country than he had in that of his own native deer ; and he knew by experience that a man trained to the use of a good telescope could detect the details of distant objects, the very presence of which would be unsuspected by officers with ordinary field glasses. No one who has not himself had much practice in the use of a glass out stalking can realize, much less utilize, its power of finding, and revealing the nature of objects altogether invisible to the naked eye. In unskilled hands a telescope is worse than useless ; and how often has one seen some unpractised fellow put down a good glass with the remark that his own binoculars were much better. Such were the considerations which gave Lovat the idea of raising a corps of men inured to fatigue in the open and, like himself, skilled in the use of the telescope.

The first I heard of it was in a letter which reached me at Vienna where I was then in the Embassy: Lovat was never a good correspondent and this is one of the few of his letters I still have :

“ BEAUFORT CASTLE,  
BEAULY, N.B.

26/99.

MY DEAR WIPE,<sup>1</sup>

I am most certainly coming out to Vienna sometime towards March. The high play at Ecarté would, of course, be an extra inducement. In the gambling line I have not been doing much lately. I took a Subscription of £314 from the ‘Boozer’s Rest,’ the new Bridge Club, the night before last ; but as the Jersey Calf, Jimmy Guthrie and the Menzies party were amongst the players the skill required was not great. My stay of a week in town at this time of year was occasioned by my anxiety to get out to the War. After

<sup>1</sup> A ridiculous nickname which the Author contracted at Winchester.

Methuen's repulse and the loss of the Highlanders, I offered to raise 150 stalkers and ghillies off my own and surrounding properties to take them out as Scouts who could see and use their glasses. My offer, after going the round of the Nobs, was practically accepted when down went Buller and the new Volunteer Scheme was elaborated. I have not yet had a definite refusal of my offer, but I should now think that the scheme was off and Ted Tytler,<sup>1</sup> Augustus<sup>2</sup> and some dozen more up here are now trying to see if the Yeomanry Corps will have anything to say to a Highland troop. We are shooting here this week, Johny Maxwell,<sup>3</sup> Sal Phipps,<sup>4</sup> (unarmed), Munro-Ferguson,<sup>5</sup> Colonel Baillie, Augustus,<sup>6</sup> Alastair and Jane.<sup>7</sup>

I had some good shoots in the South at Knowsley and Houghton, and up here did well at Dochfour, Balmacaan and Raith. I have personally been shooting badly which always rather spoils one's amusement. The last two weeks, however, I got my form back.

Hugh<sup>8</sup> has been doing a good deal of pheasant shooting and hopes to get out to plug Boers if the eighth division starts.

Alastair leaves for Cairo about January 15th. I will send him by Trieste if you are to be at Vienna about that time.

Best of wishes

Yours ever, L."

This letter shows that his task was no easy one, and there were difficulties of a more general order not mentioned by him. These should be noted as, after Lovat's Scouts were raised and had distinguished themselves, it was naturally assumed that success was a foregone conclusion. This was far from being the case.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Edward Fraser-Tytler of Aldourie, later Colonel.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Augustus Baillie, later Colonel.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Stirling-Maxwell.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Edmund Phipps.

<sup>5</sup> Later Lord Novar.

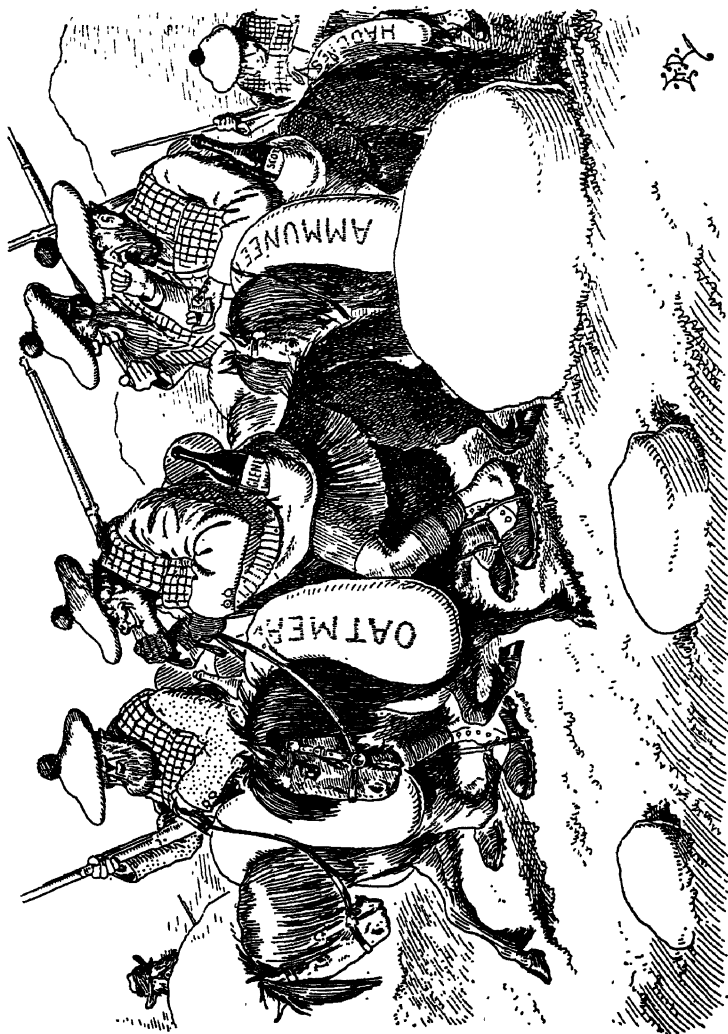
<sup>6</sup> Mr. Augustus Baillie.

<sup>7</sup> Viscount Encombe, Lovat's brother-in-law.

<sup>8</sup> The Hon. Hugh Fraser, his brother.

In the first place, the war was not of a nature to rouse enthusiasm ; and an important section of Radical opinion, well represented in Scotland, was openly what was called "pro-Boer." How little the general public were stirred by the war is best shown by the forgotten fact that, out of 300,000 yeomanry and volunteers, fewer than 25,000 volunteered for service, when invited to do so. Then the Highlands were no longer believed to be the recruiting ground they had been during and after the Napoleonic Wars when the Island of Skye alone supplied twenty-one generals, six hundred and fifty commissioned officers and ten thousand other ranks. So long ago as 1873 Dr. Norman MacLeod had deplored the change. Moreover, there had been serious agrarian unrest countered by strong measures of repression much later than 1873 amongst the crofters who had previously supplied many recruits. There were, therefore, fairly solid grounds for doubting whether Lovat's idea was practicable ; and, when first proposed, it met with both amusement and surprise. Letters appeared in the Press ridiculing it and the then Marquis of Breadalbane wrote to *The Times* to say that, in his opinion as one who knew the Highlands, the idea was an extravagant one, that the men would prove no match for the Boers and that the whole project would merely entail waste of money and useless loss of life. Lovat knew better. After consulting some friends in whom he had confidence, he persuaded the War Office to sanction his scheme in principle, and he immediately explained it to a meeting at the Highland Club at Inverness and circularized the Highland lairds.

Experienced men know that, when they have obtained the sanction of the authorities "in principle" to a scheme, the trouble is only just beginning. So it proved in the present case. Innumerable were the journeys from Beaulieu to London which Lovat had to make ; and his accounts of his interviews at the War Office lost nothing in the telling. On one occasion he found all work suspended whilst a well-known nobleman, with his equally famous cigar in his mouth, gave his views of the campaign in detail to the assembled officers. The fact was that the much abused Office was faced with a task for which it was not organized to cope ; and the confusion which reigned was due more to



# THE "GILLIE-COLLUM," OR, THE "SLIM" RED LINE!"

THE WILY BOER DOESN'T LIKE THE LOOK OF IT AT ALL—THEY LOOK MUCH TOO "DOYE" AND "CANNY" TO BE PLEASANT!

[ "A corps of 170 Highland Gillies on mountain posts is being organised for scouting purposes in South Africa." — *Daily Paper*. ]





the incapacity and lack of judgment of the generals originally sent to the front than to the shortcomings of those at home who got the blame. Few will forget the famous telegram saying that mounted men were not wanted ; and it is no wonder that, in the face of it, weeks passed before a decision could be obtained as to whether the Scouts were to have horses or not. Nor was it easier to get the numbers of the force or the terms of service definitely fixed. Then the question of uniform and other kit cropped up. The Government Stores at Pimlico were bare and everything had to be bought from private contractors. No khaki cloth could be found in spite of Lovat's frantic efforts to procure it ; and it was only finally provided after he had begun arrangements for clothing the force in the grey-green tweed worn by himself and his stalkers—a shade devised by his grandfather for its invisibility on the hill and well-known in the tailoring trade as " Lovat mixture."

But difficulties in the North melted before Lovat's infectious enthusiasm. Employers promised almost to a man to keep the places of those who enlisted open for them, and large sums were subscribed for initial expenses. The Duke of Portland, for instance, sent a dozen ponies from Langwell besides much other assistance ; and the late Lord Tweedmouth threw himself into the scheme from the first as will be seen from a letter which Lovat wrote to *The Times* shortly after Lord Tweedmouth's death :

" SIR,

There is an incident in Lord Tweedmouth's career which, in justice to his memory, I consider it my duty to bring forward.

No mud is ever thrown without some of it sticking to the wall, and, though little attention was paid to ' the Naval Estimate incident ' by Tweedmouth's friends of either party, still, as most unfair inferences were drawn, and set out at length in some of the leading papers, it seems only right to give one small example of Tweedmouth's work and his patriotic disposition.

In the beginning of the Boer War a movement was set on foot to send out yeomanry from the Highlands to fill the role of mounted scouts. The Highlander's knowledge of ground

and capacity for handling rifle and telescope appeared to specially qualify him for this difficult work. The idea met with considerable opposition, not to say ridicule, not only from those who without initiative of their own had therefore the greater leisure for criticism, but also from the War Office, naturally sceptical about any new scheme.

As one with an interior knowledge of the means by which difficulties were obviated, I can say without hesitation that, but for Tweedmouth's help in overcoming local prejudice and departmental misgiving, no yeomanry or scouts would have left the Highlands in the early part of the war.

Not only did Tweedmouth's help smooth away opposition, but also his sympathy took the practical form of an anonymous donation of £500 for the Yeomanry Clothing Fund, a free gift of 35 hill ponies, and of permission and full wages to any man who left his employ to serve in the war.

Tweedmouth's services to Highland military endeavour in South Africa did not end here. When, after 18 months' service in the field, it was decided to raise a new corps of Highland Yeomanry to replace the men at the front, a cable from South Africa once more enlisted Tweedmouth's services ; 960 men were recruited in a few days, 360 selected, and, owing to the admirable arrangements made, in six weeks from the date of the first notice given a new levy was *en route* for the seat of war.

This example is but a trifling instance of the many acts of devotion to his King and country accomplished in a long and distinguished public career.

Yours faithfully,  
LOVAT.

BEAUFORT CASTLE, BEAULY, N.B.

*Sept. 17, 1909."*

Others followed ; and Fraser of Glen Burgie Distillery enriched the force with thirty cases of whisky, which the Adjutant lodged in bond at Capetown and retrieved when the first contingent came home the following year. They finished it on board ship. Without the help of these generous friends amongst all classes the enterprise could hardly have

been carried through ; for the men required many things not supplied by the War Office.

And here, as a digression, I cannot forbear to quote an extract from a letter by the Dowager Lady Lovat on the mythical " closeness " of Scotsmen.

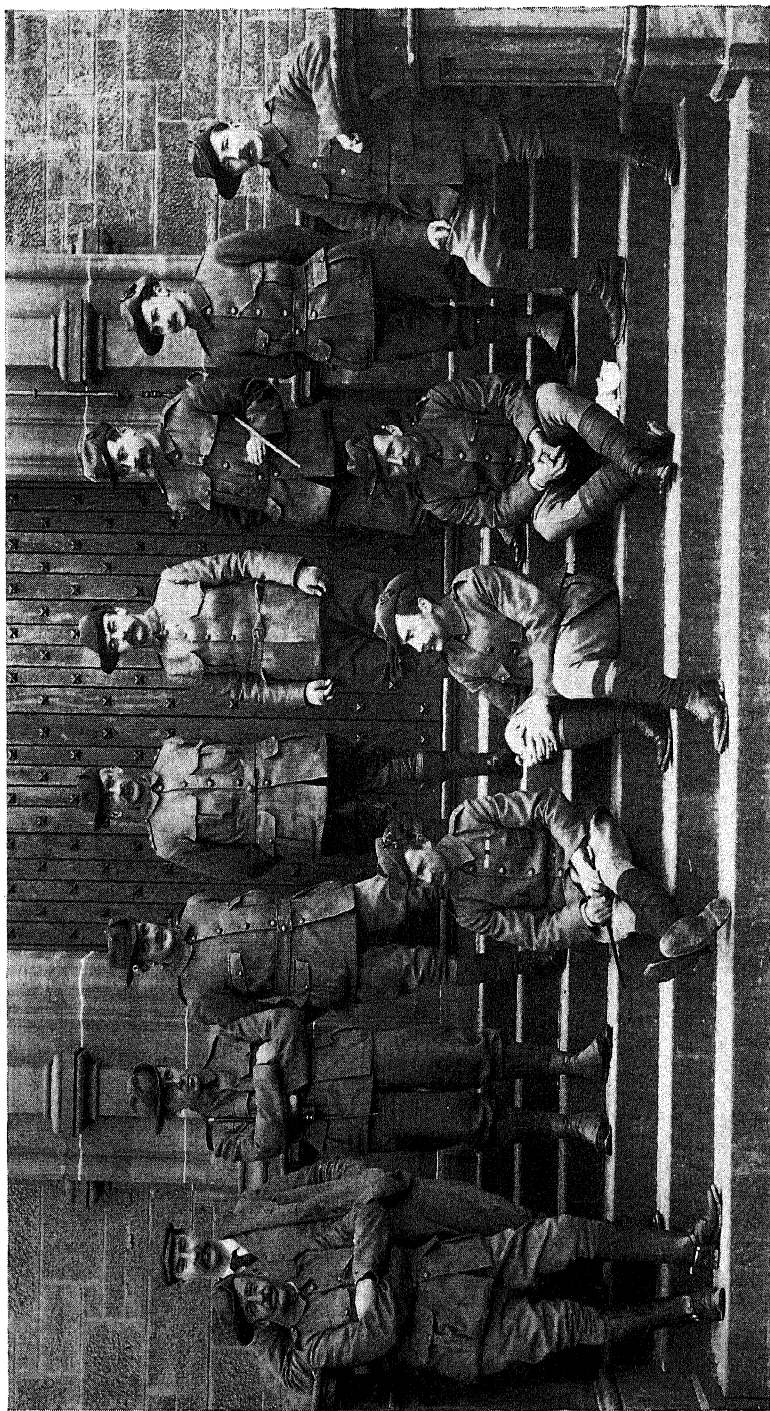
" I feel I must add the tribute of an English-woman, born and bred, to the amazing generosity of the Highlander. The general opinion of the Southron is that the Scotsman is a stingy fellow who clings to his ' bawbees ' and can hardly be parted from them. I can say by the experience of forty-five years, and of everything I have heard of them since, that the reverse is the case. If there is any testimonial to be given, any recognition of merit, or occasion of rejoicing, such as of a marriage or coming-of-age of those belonging to their own class, or those above it who have earned their respect or affection, their generosity is unbounded. And to this rule I can truly say I know of no exception."

Volunteers not only applied for enlistment but turned up in person by hundreds, often with their own ponies. The head stalker at Glendoe, Rory Chisholm, telegraphed as soon as he heard of the scheme " Arrive Beaufort to-morrow with horse." There was little to choose between the confusion in London and that at Beaufort ; for it was impossible to tell the impatient men whether they could be accepted or not or what were the terms of service. Weeks passed and Lovat went down with influenza. The first day he was up he went to the river and, getting on the ice above the cruives, walked upstream with two of his sisters and his brother Hugh to see how far the river was frozen. When close below the Black Bridge he suddenly went through. Fortunately his arms did not follow his legs and body ; and Hugh Fraser managed to get him on to the ice again. He suffered no ill effects but it was a narrow escape ; since at this point the river was running fast and deep below the ice and nothing could have saved him if he had once gone under.

At long last, towards the end of January, the War Office came to a decision. The force was to consist of a mounted and an unmounted company ; 230 N.C.O.s and men and twelve officers. Pay, allowances and bounties were to be the

same as those of regular troops on active service ; and the corps, which was to be sent to the front as soon as possible, was to be attached to the Black Watch for pay and rations and to be commanded by Highland officers. The 230 men chosen from the 1500 who applied were as pretty a lot of fellows, to use an old Highland expression, as ever assembled at Castle Dounie in the old clan days. During a visit to Beaufort shortly before the force left, Lord Tweedmouth ascertained that Lovat would much prefer both companies to be mounted and he got the War Office sanction. The unmounted company was already at sea ; but thanks to Lovat's foresight in sending a remount officer in advance to Capetown, horses had been secured before the company landed. The whole corps were, therefore, mounted throughout their active service.

Lovat had undertaken the task of raising the Scouts because he knew he was the one man to do it ; and a less modest one would have wished to command them as he easily could have done. Though he had become a Major in the 4th (Volunteer) Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders after leaving the Life Guards, he had never seen active service ; and he did not consider his experience justified him in commanding a comparatively untrained force in the field. It was essential to choose the right commander and, on Lovat's application, the War Office appointed Major the Hon. Andrew Murray of the Cameron Highlanders, then in command of the depot at Inverness. An officer of rare capacity and courage, Major Murray had served with distinction in the Sudan campaign and no better choice could have been made. Before the force left Scotland he showed his quality by refusing a more important command than the Scouts rather than go back on his promise to Lovat. With the temporary rank of Captain in the Army, Lovat commanded the mounted section of the force, and Captain V. Stewart of Ensay (late Argyll and Sutherland) the foot company. The Adjutant was Captain A. W. Macdonald and the remaining officers were Lieutenant Brodie of Brodie (late Scots Guards), Lieutenant E. Fraser-Tytler of Aldourie, Lieutenant Edward Ellice (late Grenadier Guards) of Invergarry, Lieutenant Sir Arthur Orde, Lieutenant Ewen Grant of Glenmoriston, Lieutenant K. Macdonald of Skeabost and



*Major the Hon. Andrew Murray, Lovat, and Officers of the original contingent of Lovat Scouts*



Lieutenant Rowland Hunt, M.F.H. All these officers were well known in Invernesshire and chosen by Lovat personally.

Training could now begin in earnest. The Home farm at Beaufort was cleared of its precious herd of pedigree short-horns, much to the annoyance of the head cattle-man who disapproved of the whole business, and turned into barracks for the men ; the officers were installed in the castle, where they lived free of charge, and the park was used as a parade and training ground. Much of the musketry instruction was given by the Hon. Hugh Fraser, Lovat's brother in the Scots Guards and a first-class marksman. Equitation is not the Highlander's strong point and the riding-master from the First Life Guards who superintended the training must have had some queer experiences. But in all else which goes to the making of a soldier the material was such as could hardly be matched in the British Isles. The weather was bitterly cold in January and February and snow lay deep ; but the men were accustomed to be out in all weathers and to find their way about by night as well as by day. A good many of the sham fights and manœuvres centred round a mound in the park which did duty as a kopje. Galloping up and dismounting at the bottom the men rushed to the top and got out their telescopes, leaving a couple of troopers to struggle at the bottom with the loose ponies. Very soon more ambitious manœuvres were allowed, and at one of these Corporal Angus Chisholm's powers of observation turned the scale. Going along a road he called the attention of the officer in command of the detachment to a mark in the snow made by a rising pheasant, which would, he said, unless alarmed, have merely hopped on to the low wall. The enemy must be in the little wood. The officer surrounded it and captured them. This trivial incident is mentioned because a year later the same man performed a very similar feat in real warfare ; and, as the incident illustrates well the duties for which the Scouts were raised and the manner in which they carried them out, I will give Captain (later Colonel) Kenneth Macdonald's own account of it :

“ The sequel happened in Africa a year afterwards. The Scouts and a company of Seaforth Highlanders were at a small town of the name of Philippolis. They had had a



sharp fight to get into the place and at a spot about ten miles out, sixty Scout horses had been killed. The riders had dismounted at a small hillock to engage the Boers. The shelter was not high enough to shelter the horses—who were shot dead. A day or two after, Major Murray, the Commanding Officer, sent the writer on Patrol with about twenty men to find out where some telegraph wires had been cut, the order being to go as far as the rock where the horses were killed, and from there to look with telescopes and see if the cut wires could be seen. The Commanding Officer was very insistent that great care should be taken to watch the hills on the left flank where Boers could easily get by a level plain at the back, and there cut off the small Patrol.

The writer accordingly with Corporal Chisholm duly climbed the first hill on the left, meaning to send some men up each hill all the way along to the rock. Angus Chisholm suddenly said : ‘ I think we can risk it and gallop our horses along the Plain, get to the Rock, spy for the broken telegraph wire and return. We can leave, say, three men on the hill to see if any Boers approach the hills.’ ‘ How do you know,’ I said, ‘ that there are no Boers there already?’ ‘ Ouch !’ said Angus, ‘ I see that there are vultures on the tops of the hills and they would not be there if Boers were about.’

We accordingly did this—we left three men to watch the remainder, went to the rock, spied for the cut wire—saw that the wires were intact for three or four miles beyond the rock and returned to camp. Major Murray was surprised to see us back so soon and said : ‘ Did you really “ make good ” the hills on the left as I warned you to?’ ‘ No,’ I said, and told him the story of the vultures—he was much amused.”

After receiving a special message from Queen Victoria and a pocket compass each from Lady Lovat, the force left for South Africa on March 13th, 1900. A later generation has got only too accustomed to such departures ; but in 1900 it was a novelty for men who were not in the regular Army to leave for the seat of war. There was a great crowd to see them off ; and, if there were anxious faces amongst them, there were none amongst the troops, who were looking forward to an enjoyable adventure in a good cause. The danger

added to the pleasure of anticipation ; for the fighting had none of that grim ferocity of the Great War and a Lieutenant, on setting out, might reasonably hope to see his home again instead of being able only to count on a few weeks' survival. No one in 1900 considered himself lucky to be wounded or invalided home.

The Scouts landed at the Cape on April 10th, and were first quartered at Maitland, where they had more than their share of the effects of improvization and lack of preparatory Staff work. Poor food and overcrowding in tents brought on fever and dysentery to which latter disease Lovat was one of the first to succumb. The horses fared no better and fell sick of pink eye. No wonder the originally unmounted company did not leave for the front till May 2nd, and the mounted company till May 21st. The latter reached Heilbron at the end of the month and joined the Highland Brigade, who were astonished that they had got safely through the last fifty miles from Kronstad. A letter from Lovat written about this time to his brother-in-law and sister, Viscount and Viscountess Encombe, who were quartered at Malta with Encombe's Yeomanry, gives a highly critical account of almost everything he saw.

“ MY DEAR MAYMIE AND JANE,<sup>1</sup>

You will have heard, no doubt, that I have had a touch of dysentery, now cured.

I had one relapse, and, no doubt, should have had more if I had not taken myself in hand and gone through a rigorous course of quack medicines preceded by a heavy dose of castor oil. From a scientific point of view it is no doubt a pity that the exact nature of the cure will never be known. I myself incline to a belief in the Chinese ‘ Dis,’ but others who assisted assure me that ‘ Monsonia,’ ‘ Wild Geranium root,’ ‘ Burnt Brandy and Pontac,’ ‘ Epsom Salts ’ and ‘ *Ipecacuanha* ’ all contributed their quota. One thing is certain ‘ Plasmon,’ glory be to Herbert,<sup>2</sup> sustained my strength and I feel as fit now as before my malady began.

The Lovat Scouts are divided between Kronstad and here.

<sup>1</sup> A nickname which Encombe had at Winchester.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Herbert Weld-Blundell who invented “ Plasmon ” biscuits.

We (the Bloemfonteiners) hope to get started in a day or so and to hurry events I have wired to Eddy Stanley<sup>1</sup> (who with true whip's push is running the show) and been to interview Lady Roberts.

I personally with great cunning secured a pass at Cape Town up to Kronstad ; so I shall let the troops move on till I feel perfectly well and then catch up along them by the completed railway.

As news of the war gets to you some time before we get it I will only enlighten you about those subjects on which you are likely to have the most heated arguments, *Generals* according to accounts mostly bad and all jealous. Now this jealousy is a thing of which you can have no conception. Not only do they abuse each other to the public and juniors, but on more than one occasion Infantry have practically refused to assist Cavalry and Cavalry refused to support one another. The worst case at Sanner's Post was taken notice of ; as I have heard on practically two first-rate authorities, that the offender said : 'The Cavalry have got themselves into a mess ; they may damn well get themselves out.'

The only men you do not hear much abused are Roberts and Kitchener ; and, although the latter's treatment of wounded is much criticized, it is regarded as part of the game.

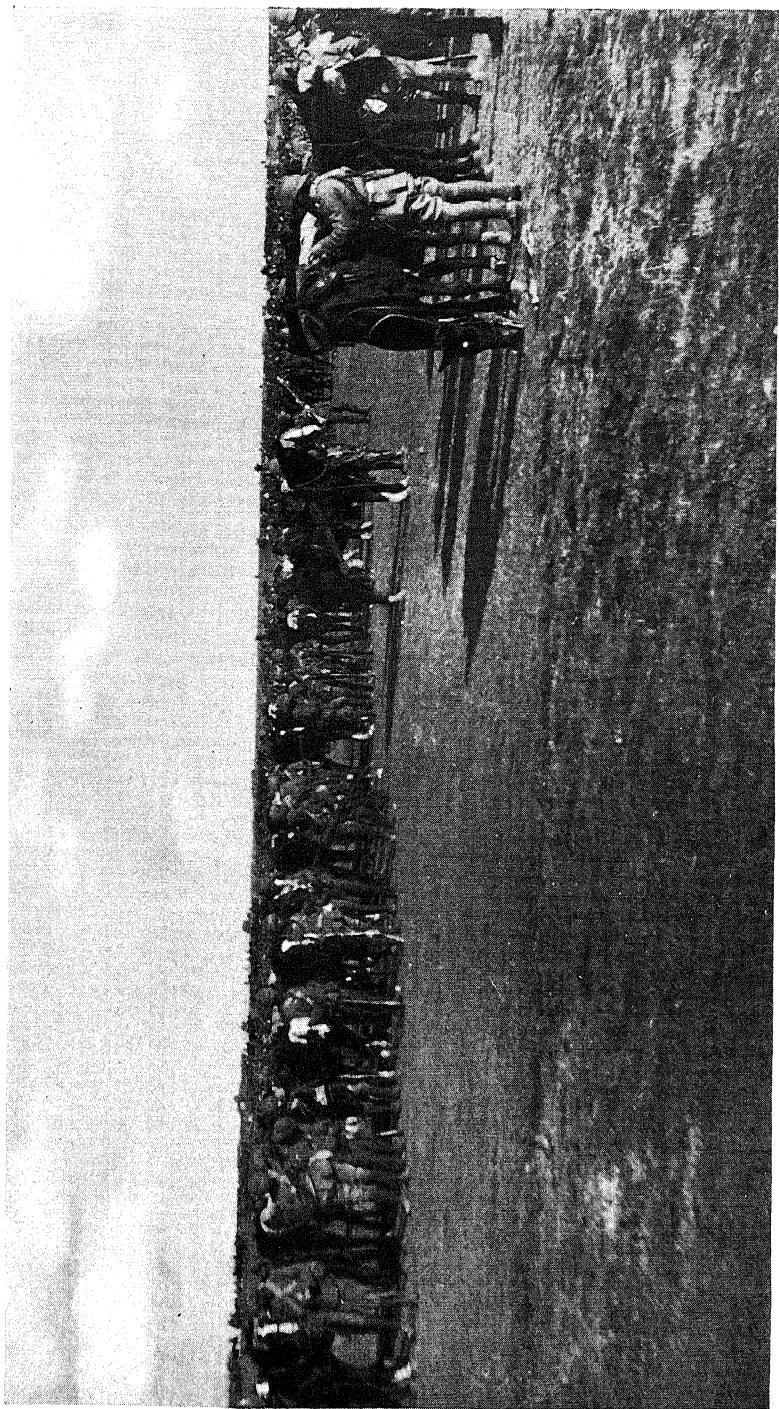
French is much hated by the other Generals ; while as for that poor old man Buller, his telegram to White after Spion Kop 'Burn ammunition and make best terms,' his getting to Ladysmith after he had ordered a retirement and his perfect idiocy at Colenso and after, no military language is sufficiently strong to describe.

Brabant you may be surprised to hear is regarded out here as a nonentity. His Colonel, Henderson, Sheep Grenfell,<sup>2</sup> First Life Guards, accompanied by Blue Hell (as the Colonials call Peter Cookson<sup>3</sup>) and the now famous Dalgetty apparently leave the poor old man behind and arrange the sport themselves. From what I can hear, Hugh's company are having

<sup>1</sup> Now the Earl of Derby.

<sup>2</sup> Later Colonel Harold Grenfell.

<sup>3</sup> Later Colonel Peter Cookson.



*Lovat Scouts saddling-up*



a good time though being more shot at than shooting, and Rundle<sup>1</sup> is one of the few men whose work is praised.

The Mounted Infantry are, as you have seen by the paper, fully occupied in action keeping their bits in. This may be true ; but from what I have seen of the sportsmen, their horse management is so bad that they can never hope to do a good day's work. The fault I think lies from the fact that Mounted Inf. have infantry officers who have no idea of what a horse can do and what he cannot.

To my horror on arriving at Maitland I found it the custom to canter horses out to water and gallop back. A new and extremely vicious method of grooming had been adopted, and the only means of progression was the hand canter. As you know, most country-breds have a good lope and for long distances nothing is better if well ridden. Now the British infantryman is usually mounted on English horses which have no lope and the only reason of the canter being adopted, apart from its idea of showing equestrian power, is that of John Gilpin 'Less galling on the seat.'

*Order and Method* so much spoken of at home have been chiefly noticeable by their absence. If you know the ropes, you can practically commit any enormity and no one seems to care.

*The Vet. Department* is scandalous, badly done and once a horse gets into sick horse lines, he dies of lack of food if of nothing else.

The hospitals up here are very short of luxuries, but I believe nurses are soon coming up. A train load of 200 men were down with one medico aged 22 in charge, and he told a friend of his in my hearing on a platform that one hospital orderly was all he had.

The Women at Cape Town 'fighting like dogs' as Wipe would say. There is evidently a fascination of ladies of the semi-demi kind for the sick hero.

*Plasmon* great and glorious ; I must have another hard biscuit and will say good-bye.

Yours ever,

LOVAT.

<sup>1</sup> Later General Sir Leslie Rundle.

Our men are much better now after getting out of that filthy six months old camp. They seemed very glad to see me again as you may imagine I was to see them."

But Lord Roberts' well-conceived plan of campaign was showing its inevitable results at this period and the tide had turned for good. The Scouts were in the thick of the advance and justified themselves from the outset. In a dispatch to the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Archibald Hunter reported :

"I paused at Bethlehem to regulate supplies and gain news. The mountain range in my front concealed forces whose numbers and whereabouts were a mystery. It possessed ins and outs, shepherd tracks, even occasional cart roads, none marked in maps. To get news Lovat's Scouts were used. The idea was General Macdonald's, instigated by Lord Lovat. In ones, twos and threes these men crept, climbed and spied, were absent for days at a time, but always came safely back with the truth discovered. Major Hon. A. Murray who commands them, Captain Lord Lovat who raised them, each officer and man in the Corps is a specialist and picked man. As scouts, spies, guides, on foot or pony, as individual marksmen, or as a collective body in the fighting line, they are a splendid band of Scotsmen, which is the highest compliment I can pay them."

General Hunter likewise ordered the O.C. Lovat's Scouts to "inform the men under his command that he is very pleased with their behaviour during the operations at Retief's Nek. It was mainly owing to the Highland Light Infantry taking the hill that the battle was won, and this was due to the skilful reconnoitring and guidance of Lovat's Scouts."

The affair at Retief's Nek was the most brilliant feat of the Scouts and deserves a short description. Retief's Nek was one of the three passes on to the Caledon River Plateau and the key of the position held by General Prinsloo and some five thousand Boers. On July 7th Captain William Macdonald was sent to reconnoitre Retief and found three



*Relief's Neck*





hundred Boers on a ridge called Vaal Krantz. Major Andrew Murray and Captain Ellice, who were reconnoitring in another direction, were cut off from the main body by a band of Boers and had to spend a wet and snowy night in hiding. The next day an attack was made on the position by the Black Watch, the Highland Light Infantry and the Sussex Regiment. The Black Watch could only take one kopje by midday ; the Highland Light Infantry, after a fine advance across the open, were held up at the foot of the rocks and the Sussex, after suffering severely, had to retire. In short, the attack had failed.

Lovat called on Major Murray and Captain William Macdonald and they discussed the possibility of taking up a hundred Scouts to the top of the ridge through the night and turning out the Boers in the dark. The left flank of the position had been reconnoitred by Captain Ewen Grant with two sections of Scouts the morning before and it was decided to attack that point. Volunteers being called for, all those present were eager to go ; and Captain Macdonald was sent to General Sir Hector Macdonald to lay the plan before him. He would not hear of it ; holding that the Scouts were too valuable to be employed in bulk on what he considered a forlorn hope. Captain Macdonald could not move his fellow clansman who, after much talk, agreed to three Scouts being sent up through the Highland Light Infantry, informing their Commanding Officer on the way that he was to act on the information brought back by them.

So Sergeant Dewar, Dugald Macdonald and John Macdonald started off in the pitch dark and, after giving the General's orders to the officer commanding the Highland Light Infantry, reached the top of the ridge without mishap. Finding it unoccupied, they went on till they could see the lighted bivouac fires of the Boers at the bottom of the slope. The three men then hurried back the way they had come and woke up the officer commanding the Highland Light Infantry, who immediately sent off a company with them to occupy the ridge. The rest of the battalion were to follow at dawn. Hardly were the company in position when the Boers began to move up the slope to re-occupy their old positions. They were beaten back after an hour's fighting.

For the next few days there was a running fight in which the Scouts were continuously engaged and on July 24th General Prinsloo surrendered with his whole force.

Lovat's own description of these events is found in a letter dated Heilbron, August 18th, 1900, addressed to me at Tehran, where I was then in the Legation.

“MY DEAR WIPE,

You old scoundrel never to have written a line. We have had a great time and really done rather well, been complimented by three Generals and had six men mentioned, besides being told by Hunter that a very large share of the Retief success was due to our reconnoitring maps and on the day of fight seizing two important kopjes. To give you news is absurd, but let me clear your intelligent mind of one or two paper errors. Firstly, to a man with eyes and capable of using them the Boers are always in sight. They wear dark clothes and can be seen for miles. They never take cover till one gets nearly within ‘naked eyesight’ range and therefore are easily picked up by the intelligent spyer.

Secondly, the Boer shelling is good, much better than our own. Their shrapnel, it is true, usually bursts high ; but then as ours never goes near the mark through entire lack of range or accuracy the advantage lies with the Boers.

Thirdly, fighting is devilish good fun before the bullets begin and as soon as the show is over. I personally have only once got sufficiently excited to get over that feeling of internal chill, irritability and anxiety to make water which used to precede my efforts in the pig-skin. On that one occasion on which I got really angry I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

As a corps we have been very lucky. One company came in for Roberts’ march, saw Doornkop and Diamond Hill, besides lesser engagements, the other company came in for Methuen’s doubtful victories and good steady picket fighting round Heilbron. I was with the latter and was lucky enough to see the three fights on the Railway as adjutant to 1000 details on my way up from dysentery to join my company.

On July 1st, our two Companies joined and we had some good fighting at Bethlehem, Retief, Nauport Hill and



*Boer prisoners*



Golden Gate, being very lucky in being the only company who saw all four. Our casualties have been extraordinarily light as yet ; only 14 men since the start though we lost four horses out of 50 one day and 9 another. Poor Brodie<sup>1</sup> was wounded in his leg and is to go home. As far as one can judge, we shall go south to round up Olivier when we have refitted here and given time to Rundle on the east of Rietz and Bruce Hamilton at Rietz to make good their positions.

The men are enjoying themselves and like the work. John Dewar and Paterson have done extraordinarily well, especially at night visits to Boer laagers. I don't think you know any of the others except McKillop, but you would recognize a good many faces of the Beaufort beaters.

Two of our men did rather a smart thing the other day. Were doing extreme right flank to yeodogs when they bumped into 7 Boers who made signs to put down their arms. Our lambs, with no thought of surrender, thought the Boers wanted to come in and yelled out ' We'll put down your b-y arms.' Then Mr. Boer fired and missed, and our fellows downed a brace and while one led back the horses the other took cover and guarded the rear. The Yeodogs not arriving as expected, a bolt was determined on, but one horse disabled made this difficult. Things began to look black for our men, when fortunately the Boers, finding the fire too hot in front, tried a turning and cutting off movement to the rear with the result that our lambs tumbled up on one horse, headed straight for the Boer laager, skirting wide as soon as clear of the immediate enemies and getting off without a scratch with at least two bagged.

Alastair<sup>2</sup> has got back with only slight go of fever. No news yet as to result. Post off.

Yrs. ever,  
L.

P.S.—Have you got a Bagdad date<sup>3</sup> yet ? ”

<sup>1</sup> Brodie of Brodie.

<sup>2</sup> His brother, Alastair, had been prospecting in Central Africa. The “ result ” turned out disappointing.

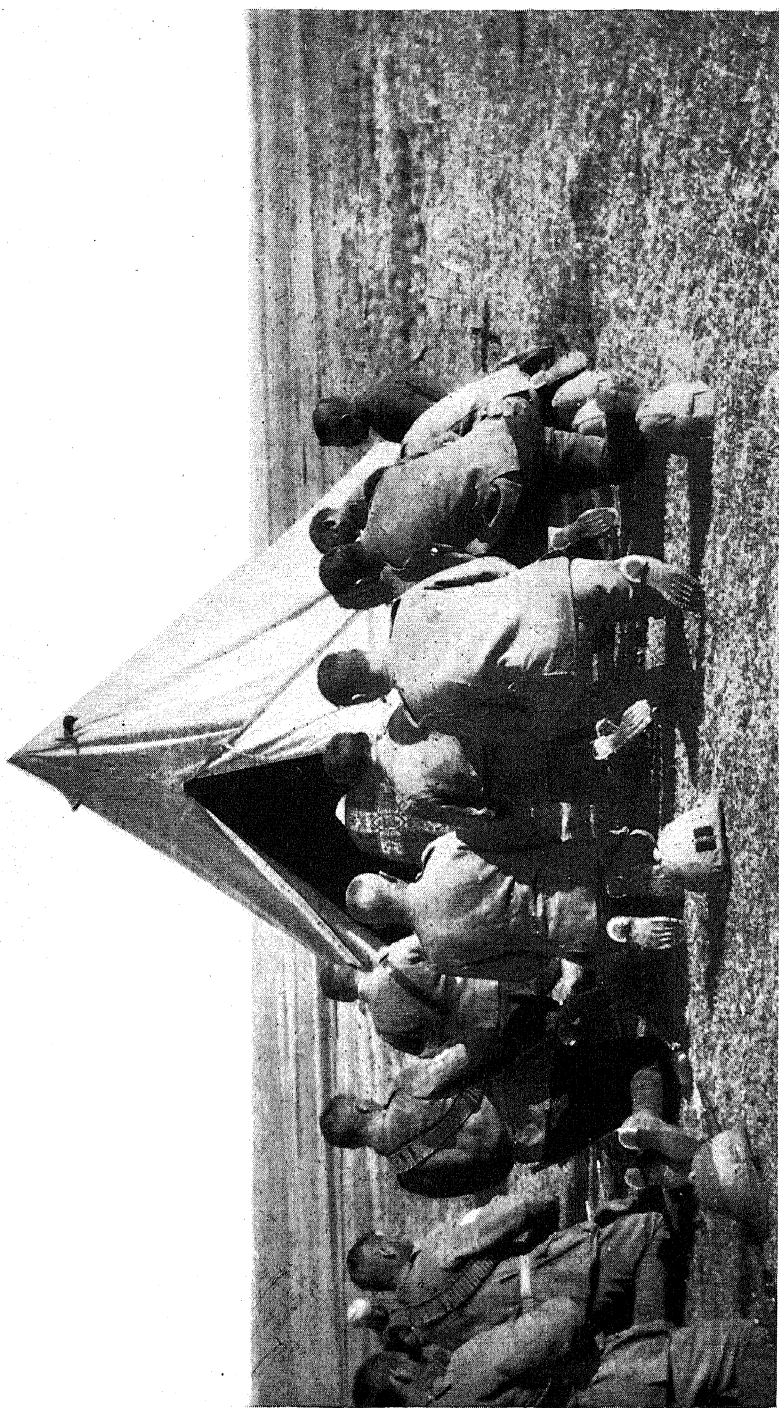
<sup>3</sup> A “ Bagdad date ” is the local name for a particularly loathsome kind of boil.

A great chance was missed soon after this when Christian de Wet, after capturing 800 prisoners at Roodeval, was lying up with his horses dead beat five miles south of the Heilbron road. The Scouts located him and reported his presence to the Generals in command. Ample forces were at hand to take him but the report was disbelieved and nothing was done.

The sort of part Lovat himself played in these affairs is described by Captain Kenneth Macdonald :

“ Lord Lovat was a man who never spared himself and was ready on any occasion to take any risk, often when it was not necessary—on one occasion the writer happened to be in charge of the advance guard and to his surprise as he came to a stream saw marks of horses’ foot-prints in the mud still showing ; suddenly he heard a voice behind him saying : ‘ They must be looking at us now.’ This was Lord Lovat who had ridden up from the main body. The stream was at one end of a defile with a narrow pass where horses could only go in single file. On both sides of the pass were large boulders and also thick trees. The Boers, as Lord Lovat said, must have been looking at us and could not have crossed the stream, a shallow sluggish one, more than five minutes before we did. The writer suggested to Lord Lovat that he should return to the main body as indeed it was not his job to be so far to the front. ‘ No,’ said Lord Lovat : ‘ You go and I’ll follow,’ and we passed through the defile. Not a shot was fired by the Boers though we must have been probably within fifty yards of them. When we got through we knew the Boers were left in the defile but had no time to search for them. We had eight Boer prisoners with us, too, and when we arrived at the Camp where we were due, the General ordered these eight prisoners to be sent back under an escort of a corporal and I think four men. Lord Lovat’s remonstrance that the defile on the way contained Boers was not listened to or believed and when the unfortunate corporal arrived at the defile he was shot dead, two of the escort wounded and the prisoners all rescued.”

Lovat was already keenly interested in Imperial questions and in the settlement of suitable men in the Dominions and Colonies ; and we find him in October giving a dinner at



*Mass on the Veldt*





Pretoria to forty of his men who had obtained posts in the newly established Transvaal Constabulary and pointing out in his speech the openings which the country afforded.

This is not the place to write the detailed history of the Lovat Scouts. It is sufficient to say that during the autumn and winter they were in constant touch with the enemy, and that they proved themselves even more useful than Lovat had anticipated. The general outlook at the end of the year and the change of atmosphere between the Roberts and Kitchener regimes are given in a letter to Viscountess Encombe dated December, 1900.

“JOABURG,

1/1901.

MY DEAREST MAYMIE,

All good wishes for the New Year. I hope I will soon be back to see you all again. Pegamoid<sup>1</sup> sends great accounts of Jack, so glad the little beast is all right again.

If the swine we call ‘Loyal Colonials’ do not rise in Cape Colony I really think there is a chance of getting a bit forrarder with this War.

K of K is going to mobilize 8000 mounted troops at De Aar to round up Kruitinger (200 plus risen colonials); and if he can get this lot stamped out quickly, I expect there will be a grand round up through the south of the O.R. Colony. Hold the line of Bloemfontein-Ladybrand strongly. Knock out the S.E. corner and then do the same in N.W. K of K is kicking out all the real lazy loafers and is getting a great move on the trains and railway officials.

I don’t expect you will get much news from the front for some time, as K of K is not encouraging the newspaper man. When Roberts was out here Eddy Stanley used to edit a circular telegram which used to give the general items of news and was tremendously popular with the troops. We used to get the winners of the big races, details of small skirmishes in W. Africa and accounts of fights out here all within a few hours of the time that it reached Pretoria. Now we don’t

<sup>1</sup> His sister, now the Hon. Mrs. Stirling of Keir.

get a word and poor Teddy is hustled down to any train that comes in to raise information whether true or false.

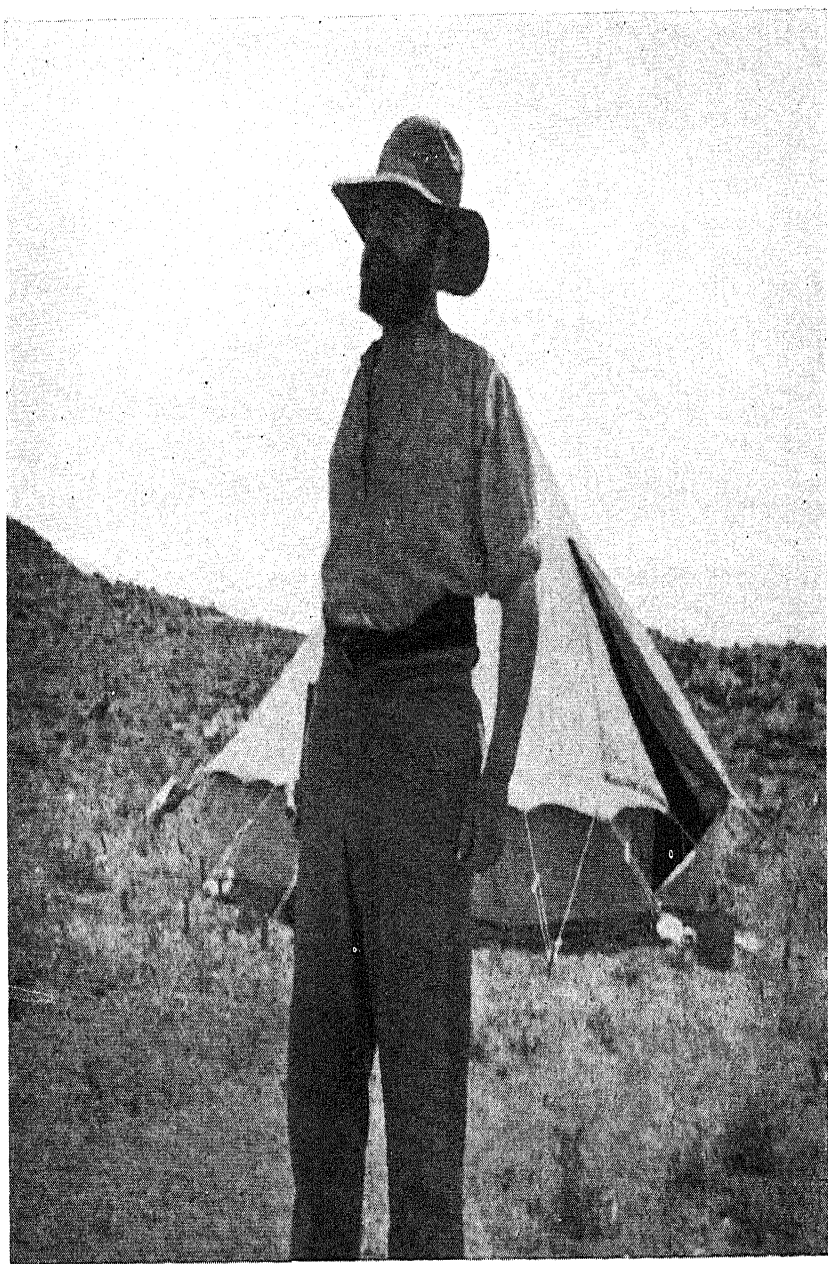
Yours ever,  
L.

P.S. Draw what you wish from Garrioch<sup>1</sup> until your affairs are settled or it is convenient to yourself."

The explanation of this postscript is a tragic one. Viscount Encombe, his great friend at Magdalen and later, had married his eldest sister in 1898, and gone with his Militia Battalion of the Royal Scots to replace the garrison of Malta soon after war broke out. There he contracted typhoid, or more probably Maltese fever ; and was moved to Sir John Stirling-Maxwell's house in London, where he died in August, 1900. A man of great promise and sterling character, his generous and charming nature endeared him to all who knew him, and he left a gap in the family circle which was never filled. After two years of perfect married life he left two boys, of which the elder is the "Jack" mentioned in this letter. He is now the Earl of Eldon and the younger is the Hon. Michael Scott.

The fall of Pretoria, eagerly anticipated by thoughtless people at home as heralding the end of the war, brought no relief to the troops. All through the autumn of 1900 the Scouts were actively engaged and their services repeatedly acknowledged by General Sir Hector Macdonald, who on one occasion reported their action as "beyond all praise," and by General Sir Archibald Hunter. They suffered remarkably few casualties ; and General Sir Ian Hamilton reported of them that the Scouts were the only troops who ever saw the Boers before they were seen. Members of other corps in their letters all spoke well of them ; and a letter from a Private in the Scouts written at this time mentions Lovat as the finest Scout of them all, telescope in hand and always leading. Nor were the comic rumours, with which we became so familiar during the Great War, lacking at home. Thus a letter appeared in a northern paper in September, 1901, protesting indignantly against the report in other northern papers that a certain "horse-hirer" in the Lovat Scouts was in gaol in Bloemfontein as a spy ! The name of the supposed

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. I. Garrioch for 40 years factor to the Lovat Estates.



*Lovat on trek*



spy was not given in the report but his place of origin and his favourite haunts were. And as there was only one "horse-hirer" in the Scouts and he was well known at the two places indicated, it was no wonder that the man was indignant.

The men had enlisted for one year and, as the war showed no signs of finishing in April, 1901, Lovat came home to raise another batch. The scoffers and the sceptics were no longer to be found and he was given a reception which showed that he had proved better than his word. Arriving at Beaufort on May 10th, he found his youngest brother Alastair Fraser, who had been in Central Africa the previous year prospecting on behalf of Sir E. Cassel, busy supervising affairs at home. The first day the list was opened eighty men presented themselves at Inverness, and nearly a thousand applied before it was closed. After a few days, Lovat paid a flying visit to London to speak in the House of Lords on the shortcomings of the Army organization in South Africa. Fresh from the war with his bronzed face and long beard, his first serious appearance in the House created unusual interest. Beginning nervously, he soon won the sympathy of his audience as he dwelt on the lack of reliable maps, on regiments depleted of their best officers who were employed on non-regimental duties, on the Remount Department which had once supplied him with 132 horses and 218 shoes amongst them, on the Supply Department which paid extravagant wages for labour and absurd prices for supplies which were sometimes bought several times over, and on the paucity of Staff officers. Complimenting him on his services, Lord Lansdowne, the hard-pressed Secretary of State for War, assured him that the points he had raised had not escaped the notice of the War Office, which was doing its best to meet an emergency for which the proper organization had to be improvised.

In this matter of public speaking his progress was a reflection of his character. Starting with no training and, as we have seen, more than average nervousness, he succeeded by dint of concentration and by mastery of his subject in becoming a forceful and convincing speaker to whom the House of Lords listened with respect and less critical audiences with enthusiasm.

Whilst at home Lovat was invested with the D.S.O. by the King and, in his own country, he was enthusiastically

re-elected President of the Shinty Association of Scotland. The question of some testimonial to the Chief of the Clan Fraser to celebrate his achievements came up at this time, and Mr. Hugh Fraser was commissioned by the Committee of the Clan Fraser in Inverness to write to Mr. Alexander Fraser, of Toronto, and President of the Clan Fraser in Canada, and invite him to use his organization in order to collect subscriptions from clansmen in Canada and the United States. The object was not to collect large individual subscriptions but to have as many clansmen as possible subscribe all over the world. Mr. Alexander Fraser welcomed the invitation and circularized the members of the Clan Fraser Association in Canada. The response, while not large in amount, was cordial in intention, and widespread in contributions ; and the episode is of interest as marking Lovat's first association with Canada which became so close later in his life. The testimonial took the form of a handsome silver box with the names of all the subscribers enrolled inside.

The training of the second lot of recruits followed the same routine as that of the first. The men were put up at the Home Farm and in tents and the officers entertained at Beaufort Castle. On June 6th, 1901, General Sir A. Hunter, just back from South Africa, inspected and addressed the force ; Provost Macbean of Inverness did the same and gave to each man a copy of Baden Powell's book on Scouting, and the Town Council and crowds from the whole neighbourhood were entertained to tea in a marquee in the park. The following day the force entrained for Southampton and South Africa with a number of new officers, amongst whom were Captain the Hon. E. O. Murray of Elibank as Adjutant, Captain the Hon. Francis Gathorne-Hardy (Grenadier Guards, now General Officer-Commanding at Aldershot), Captain the Master of Sempill, the Hon. Alastair Fraser as Lieutenant. Writing to Lady Encombe on August 2nd, Lovat said that the new men, especially Alastair Fraser, who was studying Gaelic, were taking to the work well. Writing from aboard ship on his way out, the latter described his own efficiency in infantry drill as of the order of the warrior who gave the command "Deeside Volunteers move over yonder." Lovat goes on : "We miss Willie Macdonald (Captain William Macdonald) a great deal as Adjutant. He was



*Training at Beaufort of the second contingent of Lovat Scouts*





curiously energetic and tactful, two things not often found together. He was, besides, an extra good business man and magnificent at detail. There is no doubt one learns more about soldiering with a large party of amateurs than one would in many years of home life. Andrew (Major the Hon. Andrew Murray) is in great form and very keen." He adds that the returning men left extremely fit and asks after them. They had in the meantime arrived home and were given a royal reception first at Inverness by the Provost and Town Council, and afterwards at Beaufort, where they were put up and entertained for two days with bonfires, fireworks, a ball and races and Highland games. Lovat had intended that the festivities at Beaufort should last a week but the period was curtailed by the authorities. Lady Lovat, who had always vowed she would never make a speech, welcomed them in the name of her son who, reading the speech weeks later in South Africa, considered she struck exactly the right note. Nor were the festivities confined to Beaufort; and it is recorded that at Fort Augustus the late Mr. Justice Grantham composed and recited a poem in honour of the returning heroes.

The new recruits took a little time to settle down, and in a letter to his mother and to one of his sisters soon after they arrived in South Africa Lovat gives an amusing account of their inexperience and a scathing commentary on the Remount Department.

" ALIWAL NORTH,  
*July 30th, 1901.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,

In safety off our 2nd Trek. The humours were of course diminished by 'Oor Kenny'<sup>1</sup> being on convoy work but the raw material made up in eccentricities of movement for the absent jester.

The great difficulty of the new hands was in recognizing their horses after they had off-saddled and been turned out to graze. Conversations such as 'He's my horse,' 'Noa it's my y'en,' 'Gosh, mon, but it was awfu like me ain.' 'So that's no your horse?' 'Gie's a look—ne—I had a

<sup>1</sup> Capt. MacDonald of Skeabost.

bit string on mine.' On starting the other day hurriedly I spotted a sportsman without his gun. 'Where's your rifle?' 'Dash it I clean forgot her.'

Alastair is taking well to the work and is quite our best new subaltern as yet. His reasons for being wrong are naturally plausible, but he has grasped the main ideas at all events when not under fire, whatever he may do when shooting begins.

The Master has woke up much. He has an almost 'Oswaldian'<sup>1</sup> fund of Scotch stories all different, which you must draw him on when next you meet.

I am anxious to hear about the fence with Malcolm and Cullachy.

Yours ever,  
L."

"HOTEL BALMORAL,  
ALIWAL NORTH.

Aug. 2, 1901.

MY DEAR PEG,<sup>2</sup>

We have now more or less settled down and the men and especially the officers have been thoroughly exercised in all the different 'excursions and alarums.'

Our advance Guards are hardly the things of joy and safety that our old men made: the extreme flanks have a curious facility for finding themselves buckled up on the main road or scattered out beyond the reach of any 'courrier' (Kenny) (*sic*).

We have fortunately not been heavily fired at yet when treking and two days' drill at Advance Guards with all the Subalterns out have made things a bit better.

You may tell Edmund Talbot<sup>3</sup> that our last Remount issue was a fair record of what can be done by a badly conducted department.

On Saturday, 27th July, our state (i.e. number of horses)

<sup>1</sup> Sir David Hunter Blair, now Abbot of Dunfermline.

<sup>2</sup> His sister, the Hon. Mrs. Stirling of Keir.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Lord Edmund Talbot, now Viscount FitzAlan.

was 189 sound horses. Total feeding strength 205. On Monday, 29th July, we were issued 100 horses to complete establishment. The horses arrived at night, were tied up separately, were issued and started trekking next day, and on the following Saturday our number of horses was 305 but our strength of sound horses was only 220. (That is roughly 30 more.) Of the 100 issued, 35 had strangles or parasitic mange and 11 had both strangles and mange. Eight horses had pink eye and there were, between mares that had foaled, old sore backs opened and horses kicked in the box, over a dozen unfit for work ; the remaining sick horses being made up from mange and strangles caught through horses slipping out of sick lines.

The sickening part of the job was that every care had been taken that could be—horses tied up separate on arrival, all roughly examined for strangles and mange before issue and 27 horses left behind as certain cases before we started on trek and sent straight to sick lines before issue.

On the trek we had a twice a day inspection but scarcity of rope prevented absolute isolation.

We miss old Sitting Bull<sup>1</sup> very much for Veterinary work : a very decent civilian vet came over twice to give us a help, but the horses are not getting the care they should.

I have stirred up Andrew to make a good row about it and the military authorities for once appear quite keen. What offends them is not so much issuing horses with swellings the size of melons under the chin, but that the proper number and letter has not been put on each horse's fore-shoe. This latter clause in our report was added as a probable bait for enquiry and has taken well. If one did not feel inclined to weep, there is much to laugh at in this war.

By the way, old Hart<sup>2</sup> is a dear old boy as gallant as can be, mad keen to get shot at again, although one would have thought he had enough of it at Tugela. He has been twice on the Trek with us—and fortunately leaves everything to Andrew ; his amusement being to jolly along ahead of the advance guard, every now and then pointing out some

<sup>1</sup> Captain Ewen Grant of Glenmoriston.

<sup>2</sup> General Hart.

extra wide flankers and enquiring from the men with glasses if they are Boers.

One of the occasions we went out was to rescue the Connaughts after their victorious battle of Zurfagte. I understand congratulations have come from England and Dublin, so no doubt the strategic advantages were great—All I know is that, after 4 messages for help, we were fired out of Aliwal at 5 a.m., started with every available man on mule waggons or mounted, and that the Boers, driven far and wide from a stricken field, were still within 3200 yards of the Connaught camp.

It must have made our youths get a curious idea of victory—We arrived just as they were carrying in the Connaught dead under a red cross flag—the Boer dead I regret to say were conspicuous by their absence—one that was discovered I see by the African papers has received promotion to commandant's rank after death. I have heard of '*de mortuis*,' but I do not believe in this latter day exaltation.

A much belated order has appeared that all horses are to be destroyed and that as it was impossible to drive mares and foals they are to be shot. This excellent order, unfortunately as it now transpires, only refers to the O.F.S., and Transvaal; and as all the Boers are now trekking south to get horses in the Colony, it does not seem so sensible as it first appeared.

This letter may appear to you as if the prospects seemed to me bad. This is not the case. I am rather doubtful about finishing by November, but I feel certain there will be a big change for the better soon: horses and forage are distinctly short for the Boers and they are getting well but quietly hunted. An order saying that only Boers picked up dead are to be counted will bring down the bags.

Yours ever,

LOVAT."

Another letter, addressed to his sister the Hon. Mrs. Bernard Maxwell, shows both the military preoccupation and the amusements of this time.

" LEMONFONTEIN,

*Aug. 24th, 1901.*

MY DEAR ELSIE,

We are quartered at a place called Lemonfontein and may wait here any time from 1 hour to 6 weeks according as it may seem good to the Burghers to come South or not. Andrew and I who know the country are very anxious to go north of the river, as we would then be on the inner side of the bend that the river makes here and besides being able to intercept Boer patrols we would be working on inner lines if it was necessary to reinforce any post.

Kruitzyger has moved north of the river. There have been a few small engagements but nothing of importance ; every one still saying that some big move comes off on the 26th when the Block houses are to be completed. I think I have already expressed my views on the subject of the latter. Kruitzyger has shown his complete contempt by going out of his way to pass between two distinct sets on one dark night.

Our estate of Lemonfontein enjoys one advantage of being an extremely sporting one. Partridges, deer and pigeons can all be shot on the manor. Our best bags as yet being 4 buck ; and of partridges 6 and one lost in an ant bear hole.

We are making a golf course and have challenged the Connaughts at polo.

Yours ever,

LOVAT."

On September 20th, 1901, the Scouts suffered their only disaster and it was a grievous one. The camp of Colonel the Hon. Andrew Murray was surprised and both he and the Adjutant, Captain the Hon. E. O. Murray of Elibank, were killed. There were, as usual on such occasions, wild rumours as to what had really occurred and, to clear them up, Lovat wrote a short account to his sister of what actually happened. There is nothing to add to it, except the curious fact, recorded by one of Lovat's officers at the time, that Lovat was very uneasy all that night and slept in his boots—a thing he only did on one other occasion during the campaign.

“ *Private.*

In the Afternoon, 19th September, Col. Murray shifted Camp from Quaggafontein to Guadeberg. At 5.15, the force under my command, one Subsection 39th Battery and 1 company Lovat Scouts arrived at Elands Kloof and received orders to camp there.

Col. Murray at the time stated that his camp was unsatisfactory, but that he believed it hidden from Boer posts on Guadeberg Hill and from the Boer force (170 with 60 spare horses) on Champayne Hill. Col. Murray's force at Guadeberg consisted of 1 Subsection 39th Battery and one company Lovat Scouts (less detached post of 1 section). At 12.10 (midnight) Sept. 19-20, the Boers attacked in two parties.

a. About 60-70 on foot along rocks to N of Camp.

b. On Horseback on top of ridge to N of camp.

The picket N of camp heard mounted party, did not fire but sent in a man.

The Boers on foot arrived before man from picket, formed line between officers bivouacs and head of horse lines and after pouring two volleys into officers' bivouacs turned and opened a heavy fire into the lines.

About 30 Boers at once got near the gun, shooting down the gunners as they came out of their bivouacs and enfilading the first two sections of horse lines.

Col. Murray and Capt. Sempill broke through the Boers and got down to the bottom of the horse lines near the waggons when the rear sections had begun to fire. Over 40 per cent of the total number of men in camp were hit in the first 5 minutes. The men were hampered by the knowledge of their own comrades being in the horse lines, and, though the Colt gun was got into action and firing lasted 35 minutes, there was practically no possibility of doing any good.

Col. Murray was killed about 15 minutes from the start trying to get the men together for a bayonet charge.

The Boers remained 40 minutes in camp when Captain Hardy returned with the men he had rallied on the right flank.

Capt. Sempill and Lt. Chalmers took about 30 men into their camp at daylight.

Everything was done that was possible for the wounded, Major Moore and Col. Copeland giving all assistance in their power.

The wounded under care of Dr. Lee who worked indefatigably reached Major Moore's camp that night.

Two dead Boers were picked up."

The Mansfield family wished that Colonel Murray's body should be brought home and Alastair Fraser was detailed to undertake the task of recovering it. His account to his sister shows that it was no light one.

No. B2.

" ODENDAAL,

(or )

*Oct. 5th, 1901.*

DEAR PEG,

Many thanks for all your letters. I don't know whether I have written to you quite 32 times. I never remember who I write to last, but it does not matter much.

The day after I wrote last I left Willernsfontein at 6.30 to go with an unarmed Red X party of 6 men to bring back poor Andrew Murray's body, which is being sent back to Scotland. We had 25 miles there and 25 back, and as it took over three hours disinterring the body and sealing down the lead coffin and we had taken the worst horses as we were frightened the Boers might come down and collar them, you can imagine we had a bit of jostle to get in before dark. However, we just managed to get in about 7, only to find that the others had left an hour before at 30 minutes notice for Aliwal. I slept with the Connaughts and followed on next morning, horses dead beat, and I was very frightened the rest might be trained off somewhere at once, old Moore thought Natal likely. After 10 miles horses were stone cold and last 15 we had to lead them most of the way. However we got in at 2 and found they had got in at 3 that morning and were trekking to Oudendaal at 4 in the afternoon. I got a fresh horse and came on. We marched till 12 that night and moved on again at 3 and came to within a few miles of here by daybreak. Of course it was my luck to be orderly dog and got no peace that day, and had to go round the



outposts at night, so I had to put off a good sleep till the day after. We are in a fine strong camp here, a flat plain with a little fold in the ground forming a right angle, from two sides you think you see the whole flat for miles and yet 100 yards away you don't see a sign of the camp. The country here is extraordinarily deceiving in that way and the Boers make wonderful use of it. We are about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the river and are supposed to dash out to the assistance of any blockhouse as soon as it sends up a rocket. Every night we hear heavy firing, but it never seems to be at anything more exciting than a cow or a nig-pig.

The night we came down we went in fear of our lives as all the blockhouses fire at night. Poor Kenny<sup>1</sup> who was on advance guard, as he had helped to build them and knew where they were, was sent on to square them and by some wonderful chance was not fired at once. Simon had insisted on the General sending a courier (as Kenny calls them) by daylight to say we were coming. Our pegro was sent with a message from one blockhouse to another and was promptly fired at. He returned hurriedly to his own and was greeted with another volley and then wisely lay up in a donga till day-break. I don't think there is much likelihood of our being rushed again, we always now have a section sleeping out on each side of the camp. I wish they would try—of course a night attack if it is not a success is an abject failure.

Brodie has a regular scale of names for the blacks according to colour ranging from a negro to a pegro-nego, who is lighter, to a begro pegro and a pigro or pegrto who is almost white—all being included in the generic term nig-pig.

One talks the most extraordinary drivel in this country. Our trek being in charge of one section of our Company I ride at the head of the column with Brodie. He talks more rot than Wipe even. It is a great advantage being ahead as one escapes most of the dust. Rearguard is the poorest fun, as it means getting into camp late, hours late if there is a bad road, and the mules are tired besides, pulling the waggons out of drift; though that is really another job as rearguard until dark keeps 1000 yards behind the last waggon; but after dark, if you are still going, it closes in and shoves behind.

<sup>1</sup> Captain Kenneth Macdonald of Skeabost.

The job I like least is escorting waggons into Aliwal for supplies but luckily some fool generally volunteers for it. I can't imagine why and I have generally escaped.

Yours affectionately,

ALASTAIR FRASER."

After Colonel Murray's death, Lovat commanded the Scouts with the rank of Major in the Army. The losses suffered at Guadeberg, two officers and nine men killed, one officer wounded and twenty-four men severely and six slightly wounded, had to be made good. The men of the Company just returned home offered to fill up the gaps and, with these and others, a fresh company of 130 went out from Beaufort in the autumn. In the meantime, the Scouts were more actively engaged than ever and were constantly making small captures of prisoners and large ones of horses. Up to the very end they were in the forefront. At long last, on May 31st, 1902, peace was signed at Pretoria. The war was really over this time ; and the moment had come to count the cost. It is difficult for those whose experience does not go back to the Boer War to realize the anxiety and grief caused at home by the losses suffered ; and some measure of the callousness of this later time is afforded by the fact that fatal casualties on the roads in one year are very slightly less than the total of men killed and died of wounds during close on three years of fighting. Those who died of disease, 13,272, were nearly twice as numerous.

Readers will be getting tired of descriptions of festivities in the North, and will be able to imagine the scenes at the final home-coming. Lovat himself, who later received the military C.B. for his achievements in the campaign, arrived before his men but would allow of no public rejoicings till they could share in them. His ubiquity, as was pointed out by a speaker at Inverness, rivalled that of de Wet himself ; for on the Tuesday after his arrival home he spoke in the House of Lords ; on Wednesday he was at Inverness ; on Thursday he attended the funeral of the Duchess of Atholl ; on Friday he was at the Highland Agricultural Society Show at Aberdeen and on Saturday he was at another funeral, that of Colonel David Munro, whose son was in the Scouts. There

was a civic function at Inverness, an illuminated address from his tenants, a sword of honour from the Fraser country of Stratherrick, a testimonial from the Shinty Association and an inspection of the Scouts by General Sir A. Hunter, G.O.C. in Scotland, before they were paid off in August, 1902. Finally there was a great testimonial from the people on the estate. Five hundred pounds had been collected and it was proposed to present Lovat with his portrait in oils. But he considered this too personal to himself and it was at his suggestion that a monument was erected in the public Square in Beaulieu. This was eventually unveiled by Mackintosh of Mackintosh, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Inverness, in 1905. In accepting custody of the monument, Lovat laid stress on the purely Highland character of the movement for raising the Scouts. It was in the old tradition and could have had no chance of success but for the support of the people of all classes in the district.

The Memorial bears the following inscription :

ERECTED  
BY THE LOVAT TENANTRY AND FEUARS  
OF THE AIRD AND FORT AUGUSTUS DISTRICTS  
TO COMMEMORATE  
THE RAISING OF THE LOVAT SCOUTS  
FOR SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA  
BY  
SIMON JOSEPH 16th LORD LOVAT C.V.O. C.B. D.S.O.  
WHO DESIRED TO SHEW  
THAT THE MARTIAL SPIRIT OF THEIR FOREFATHERS  
STILL ANIMATES  
THE HIGHLANDERS OF TODAY  
AND WHOSE CONFIDENCE WAS JUSTIFIED  
BY THE SUCCESS IN THE FIELD  
OF THE GALLANT CORPS  
WHOSE EXISTENCE WAS DUE  
TO HIS LOYALTY AND PATRIOTISM

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A.D.1905

## CHAPTER V

LAND SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA. IMPERIAL DEFENCE AND THE  
DANGER OF INVASION. THE PARLIAMENT BILL. IRELAND.

1902-1914

IT is now a commonplace that the South African War marked the end not merely of the reign of Queen Victoria but of the great era of low taxation, growing prosperity and complete national security and confidence connected with her name. Some felt it at the time and amongst them was Lovat, who returned home with two preoccupations which he never lost : Imperial Defence and Land Settlement. Although we had shown in the war our traditional staying power, we had demonstrated to the world not only our military weakness, but, in the initial stages of the war, an unparalleled ineptitude in the field. Foreign military opinion was, moreover, deeply impressed by the consternation caused in the United Kingdom by what it considered trifling losses, and by some indefensible surrenders of individual units ; and the conviction grew abroad that we should never bring ourselves to face the heavy casualties of a serious conflict. That this conviction proved a complete delusion did not prevent it from exercising an unfavourable influence on foreign affairs during the next decade.

Land Settlement was always connected in Lovat's mind with the greater subject of Imperial Defence which he hoped it would strengthen by increasing the prosperity of the Dominions and fortifying their ties with the Mother Country ; and it was this question which he first raised in the House of Lords after his return home. Incidentally this controversy brought him into touch with the question of Chinese labour. He had obtained good places in the mines for some of his own men, but they all left after a short time because they found

that, working side by side with Kaffirs, they lost caste with the community. The stricken country demanded an early resumption of work in the mines without which no start could be made on the return road to prosperity ; and Lovat was persuaded, from what he had himself seen, that it would take years to get the mines into real working order again without Chinese labour. Owning no mining shares himself, he did not hesitate to give his full support to an unpopular measure ; and he was unmoved by the unscrupulous clamour which was so successfully raised by the Party opposed to the Government. Looking back, it is easy to see that he, caring only for the interest of the country, was right, and that the Government, from the Party point of view, were wrong. But it is not easy for one who has seen the living conditions of the Chinese labourer in his own home and who knows the eagerness with which the Chinese workman seeks employment abroad if allowed to take it—it is not easy for such a one to condone an agitation which of set purpose and with the grossest misrepresentations subordinated the public interest to Party advantage.

The campaign for Land Settlement in South Africa was opened in July, 1902, by Lord Camperdown, who called the attention of the House of Lords to the desirability of offering facilities for British subjects to settle in South Africa ; and Lovat joined in the debate in order to give the point of view of the soldier who had been fighting in South Africa. The official scheme for settlement required a maximum capital of £300, whereas the ordinary yeomanry trooper had saved only £75 to £150 during the war. As regards the ordinary fighting man, therefore, insufficient facilities for settlement were given. The oxen necessary to start a farm cost £250 and that was only the beginning. There were numbers of men anxious to settle and any amount of suitable land. On imperial grounds it was highly desirable that these men should be settled and the overwhelming preponderance of Boers in the country districts diminished. He calculated that an expenditure of four millions would settle a minimum of five thousand men who, without such assistance, would probably drift into the towns and swell the numbers of that most objectionable class the “ poor whites.” The speech of Lord Ribblesdale, who followed Lovat, assumed, possibly

with some psychic premonition of the distant future, the benevolent tone suitable to a father-in-law. With a thorough knowledge of the land and having personally travelled through South Africa, he recommended ample capital and caution before investing it. A good many might have profited by his advice.

In March, 1906, Lovat rose in the House of Lords to ask the Government two questions : (1) Regarding their policy as to Land Settlement in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony ; (2) As to the steps they were to take to safeguard the interests of British farmers and others who had recently taken up land under the Land Settlement Ordinance in those Colonies. As ever, it was the future of the Empire that interested Lovat most, and he first dwelt on the fact that racial feeling was mainly due to the cleavage between the towns inhabited by the British and the country peopled by the Boers ; and that individual British families get on well with their Boer neighbours. It was, therefore, essential for future harmony that the two races should be better balanced on the land. On the whole, the two and a half millions so far expended had not been wasted and more than half of it was repayable. Directly and indirectly it had resulted in the settlement of between two and three thousand men, most of whom had done well. Was the work going to be abandoned by the Government and those struggling to find their feet in the Colony deserted ? Was Majuba to be repeated when those who sided with us lost their all after a disastrous peace ? That was the fear of many, though he acknowledged that the position would be very different under a Constitutional Government from what it had been in 1881. In any case, Lovat urged, the Land Settlement Ordinance and the Board should be continued for a time and the half million provided and yet unexpended should be spent on carrying on the work, principally in the Orange River Colony. The mining magnates had guaranteed two millions, and they should be asked to produce at any rate some part of it for the settlement of ex-service men, whose presence would enable the existing garrison of twenty thousand men to be cut down. In a sympathetic reply Lord Elgin, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, rightly emphasized the importance, so often underrated later, of choosing settlers with suitable experience ;

and he paid a long overdue compliment to the work done by the Agricultural Department set up by Lord Milner. But the Constitution of the Colonies was in the making and he could promise nothing for the future. Lord Milner wound up the debate and urged most strongly the retention of the Land Settlement Board for a time in the Orange River Colony even if full responsible government were granted to the Colony.

In November, 1906, Lovat again put his two questions to the Government in the House of Lords. The Ridgeway Commission had, in the meantime, drawn up but not published its report, and it was known that the Government intended to grant full and Responsible Government to the South African Colonies. But, as Lovat pointed out, this did not preclude the retainment of an Imperial Land Board to safeguard the interests of the settlers. He quoted letters and press extracts showing not merely that the Boer leaders were hostile to the whole policy of British Settlement, but that the more violent were only waiting for an opportunity to make the country too hot for the settlers. This opportunity would come with elected Chambers in which the British settlers would not have a single representative. Lord Elgin refused to be drawn. He expressed no hostility in principle to a Land Board free from political influence ; but a settlement of this question could not be separated from the Constitutional issue. Lord Milner, who was of course strongly opposed to the grant of Responsible Government, had no difficulty in giving many instances of Imperial Government Departments, such as the Admiralty, owning valuable property in Colonies with Responsible Government ; and he argued with force that it would be no greater an infringement of Colonial rights for an Imperial Land Board to do the same. The Government speakers stuck to their guns.

Lovat's persistence resulted in the care of the settlers being handed over partly to an Independent Land Board and partly to the Governor until 1912, when it was hoped the passions roused by the war would have cooled ; and when he next called the attention of the House of Lords to this question in August, 1909, it was to bring to notice the failure of the Government to afford any further financial

support to land settlement and to air certain well-grounded grievances of the settlers.

Lovat's efforts to put British settlers on the land in South Africa were not confined to championing their cause in the House of Lords. In 1907 he formed a private Company called the Mushroom Valley Agricultural Training Association Limited, to take over the assets and liabilities existing under an Agreement between the Colonial Secretary, acting on behalf of the Government of the Orange River Colony, and the Imperial South African Association. He was elected Chairman of this Company, the share capital of which was provided by himself and a small number of his friends—prominent amongst whom was Sir Samuel Scott. The Company was thereby enabled to make loans to suitable tenants holding their farms from the Company covered by mortgage bonds as security. In this way acceptable settlers were assisted in establishing themselves as farmers in the Orange Free State.

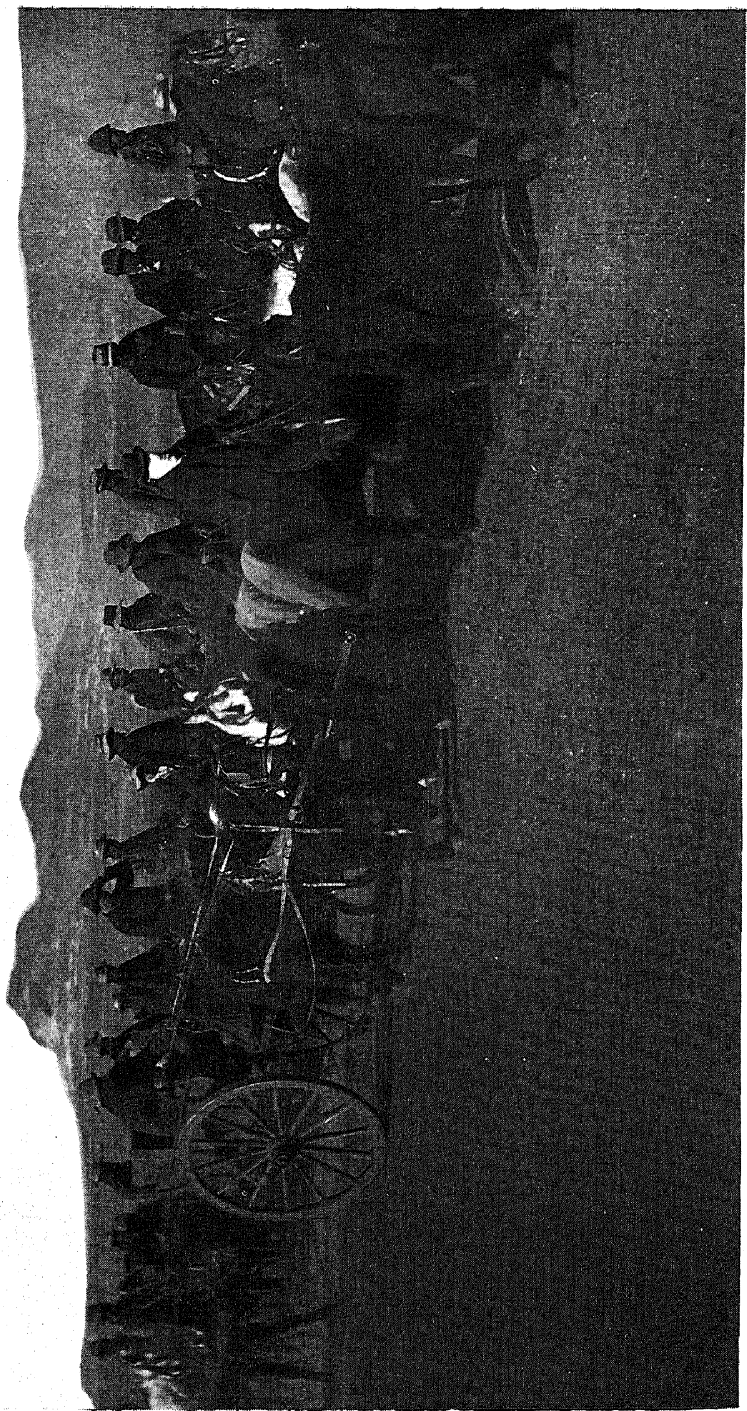
The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company provided that in the event of liquidation the surplus assets, instead of being distributed to the shareholders, should be transferred to some other institution having objects similar to the objects of this Company. No dividend was paid on the shares, and in 1910 the Company was liquidated and the surplus assets were transferred as directed to a new Company with similar objects.

This second Company, formed in 1910 with Lovat as Chairman, was also a private company; it was registered under the name of The Mushroom Land Settlement Limited, and operated in Swaziland. Of an authorized capital of £50,000 only a nominal amount of £400 has been issued to eight shareholders, who hold their shares as nominees for the benefit of the Company. The necessary funds to enable the Company to begin the work of settlement were forthcoming and the surplus assets of the Mushroom Valley Agricultural Training Association were transferred to Mushroom Land Settlement Limited. As in the case of the former Company, Lovat was Chairman from its formation, and with the exception of a period from May 6th, 1927, to June 25th, 1929, when he held the office of Under-Secretary of State for the Dominions, he continued to occupy that position up



to the time of his death. The Mushroom Land Settlement Limited now owns considerable blocks of land in Swaziland which it has purchased from time to time. The land is selected for its agricultural value and is divided into farming areas of about 1000 acres each. These areas are offered to settlers on leases of four, eight and twelve years at rentals based upon cost with the option of purchase by instalments. A training farm has also been established upon one of the estates where intending settlers can spend about two years in preliminary training, and in visiting the farming areas for the purpose of selecting their land.

Whilst busy with his schemes of land settlement, Lovat set to work at the more absorbing problem of defence. We have seen how he addressed the House of Lords during his visit home in the middle of the Boer War ; and, shortly after he came home for good, he gave, before a banquet to his honour in Edinburgh, an address in the Hall of the University Union entitled : "An efficient Army and what lies between us and Conscription." This address, long since forgotten, contains some passages which show an uncommon degree of prescience when seen in the light of later experience. He began by pointing out that the strength of the nation in time of trouble did not lie in the petty number of regular troops which could be sent to a threatened spot, but in the untrained and patriotic millions of Britons at home and beyond the seas. It was on these and not on our armed forces that our position as a world-power rested. The South African War, quite a minor one in itself, had very soon brought us to the end of our Regular Army resources. Our Army, as constituted, was not equal to the tasks it might have to carry out ; and in the future we must regard not only our auxiliary forces, but also our millions of able-bodied men as the backbone of our power, and the Regular Army the trained nucleus round which that power was to form. Army Reform must, first, be such in our trained branches as could admit of proper expansion. The shortage of officers had proved lamentable, and at times half the companies of a battalion were commanded by boys of less than two years' service. The very word "remounts" brought a whiff of rascality and more than a whiff of incompetence with it. Much could be done there with little cost. Why should not



*Captured Boers*



small job-masters be subsidized in order that in time of war they should help to run depots under proper military control? Grooms who volunteered at a slight increase of pay would do admirably for sick-horse work. Men who had experience of horse-management on board ship should be registered. Lack of system and of experienced men had led to inconceivable waste of public money. For instance, our Army authorities fixed the wages of Blacks at £4 10s. a month when the customary wage was ten shillings a month with a few extras. Yet there were hundreds of patriotic business men who went out to fight for their country and, from their sedentary habits, made but moderate company leaders. Why should not a register be made of their personal status and character and use made of them in the financial departments? As for maps, they had none in South Africa nor any men who could make them. A pay department which would admit of very large expansion was necessary. Regular paymasters would be absolutely necessary in our irregular forces on a war footing. The Press had mentioned the grievances of unpaid yeomanry; but the taxpayer would soon hear of yeomanry paid twice and three times over. He could tell them of Squadron Leaders whose accounts came out leaving them what might be called unaccountable profit to the extent of £1000 a piece, and of squadron accounts dropped overboard as too muddled to use. There were splendid men and completely worthless ones working side by side—no equality of work and no co-ordination of departments. It was a pleasure to turn to the Supply Departments like the Army Service Corps and the Ordnance which provided good material quickly and were properly organized, capable of great expansion and had stood the test. The Canadians and New Zealand backwoodsmen had been used for scouting and the railway pioneers for laying railways. In other words, in their cases, specialists had been employed on their proper work. This was the system which must be extended indefinitely. Instead of such men as grooms, telegraphists, medical students, railwaymen, etc., etc., serving in the ranks of the Army, they should be registered and put into their proper places in time of war.

In his zeal for the Empire Lovat was naturally attracted by Lord Milner, who had collected round him a band of

promising young men famous to the world as his "Kindergarten." A number of these came home from South Africa in 1909 on the completion of the Convention which drew up the new South African Constitution. Prominent among them was Mr. Lionel Curtis, who projected a survey of the Imperial problem analogous to that which he and other members of the Kindergarten had made of the South African problem, a survey which led up to the Union. At that time, 1909, the German menace was already looming, and people were beginning to consider both the problem of how the Dominions could contribute to Imperial Defence and whether any constitutional reconstruction of the Empire was necessary to meet the new and threatening conditions. Lord Milner and Lovat embraced the idea of an enquiry wholeheartedly; and Lovat succeeded in raising money and arranging meetings of which the most important was one at Lord Anglesey's seat in North Wales. Such was the origin of the "Round Table" movement, which led to a series of journeys by Mr. Lionel Curtis resulting in the publication of *The Commonwealth of Nations*, the formation of study groups all over the Empire, and the production of the "*Round Table*" *Review* of which Mr. Philip Kerr (now Marquess of Lothian) was the first editor. The whole movement and the *Review* exercised much influence on the thought of the day; and Lovat's part in it illustrates well both the strength and the weakness of his achievement. Without his energy and enthusiasm the idea underlying it might never have fructified; but, when well launched, Lovat left the conduct of affairs to others and contented himself with a friendly interest in the proceedings.

As time passed, Lovat came to the definite conclusion that war with Germany was sooner or later inevitable; and, painfully aware by experience of our military shortcomings, he got together in 1904 a small informal committee consisting of himself, Lord Roberts, Sir Samuel Scott and Colonel à Court Repington. All these shared Lovat's views and they made a strong combination. Lord Roberts had vast experience and prestige; Sir Samuel Scott, who had been in the Royal Horse Guards, a Member of the House of Commons, had served throughout the South African War, and was actively engaged in helping the

Mushroom Valley enterprise, was one of those men who unobtrusively and effectively support patriotic movements with their brains and their resources ; Colonel Repington was, as he later showed, a different type of man to the others ; but he made an ideal secretary. A lucid and effective writer, he was capable of listening to hours of argument without taking a note and producing at the end a memorandum recording accurately the views of each. It is a mystery how Lovat induced Colonel Repington to serve, for he was very busy writing for *The Times* and doing other literary work and the secretaryship entailed a vast amount of hard work.

The object of the Committee was to bring vital facts before the Government, who did not, in Lovat's belief, appreciate the danger of our position. Procedure was simple. Lovat usually took the lead as to the next point to be investigated ; but the experience of Lord Roberts and the views of the other two had full play. As is usually the case, the start was the main difficulty ; and it was Lovat's dynamic energy which overcame it. For about three years the Committee worked collecting information from every kind of source—even sending out a competent Captain of the Mercantile Marine to secure evidence in Germany itself. As the information came in, Colonel Repington collated it and submitted a rough memorandum. Regular meetings were held at which these memoranda were discussed and criticised for hours—meetings lasting often till midnight or one o'clock in the morning. And from time to time the members of the cabal would pass a week-end with Lord Roberts at Engelmere, where they sometimes met Mr. Haldane, then Secretary of State for War. It was amusing to see how adroitly the latter refused to be drawn when he did not wish to commit himself.

On May 11th, 1905, Mr. Balfour made a remarkable speech in the House of Commons in which he denied the possibility of invasion. Lord Roberts, he said, had laid down that a force of 70,000 men was the smallest with which any country would attempt to invade the Kingdom ; and the Admiralty calculated that, for such a force, 250,000 tons of shipping were required, supposing the enemy to be France, and that there were not normally more than 100,000 tons in French Channel and Atlantic ports. The assemblage of the

extra 150,000 tons would give us ample warning to collect our Fleet, which would make the actual disembarkation, requiring forty-eight hours, a hopeless undertaking. Lovat had no more confidence than other well-informed men in the calculations of the Admiralty, and it is not surprising that this speech convinced the Committee more strongly than ever that the Government did not appreciate the danger in which we stood, and work was intensified. Lovat was already in close touch with General Henry Wilson, who was to play such a prominent part in the War, and an interesting Memorandum was drawn up by the two men at this time comparing the German and British Armies from all conceivable points of view. No doubt it was discussed by the Committee who finally completed their investigations in 1907. They embodied the results in a Memorandum which they communicated to Mr. Balfour, who was then out of office.

The views of a statesman in opposition are rarely identical with those he holds when in power ; and it will surprise no one that Mr. Balfour in 1907 found that the situation had become more critical than when he made his optimistic speech two years before. He wrote to the Secretary of the Imperial Defence Committee in June of that year embodying the views of Lovat's Committee ; and Mr. Asquith directed that a sub-committee of the Defence Committee should assemble in order to hear what the Committee had to say. The memorandum the latter produced was a monumental piece of work which examines in detail the possibility of a German invasion. Peace-strengths, war-strengths, semi-war strengths, garrisons, railways and their time-tables, harbours, open roadsteads, quays, cranes, tidal depths, relative distances and tonnage likely to be available without previous notice are all scrutinized with meticulous care and illustrated by a wealth of tested data. Nor was this investigation confined to one side of the North Sea. The vulnerability of our coasts, the disposition of our fleets, the number of troops available to repulse an invader and the resources on which he could subsist were all examined with the same care. Finally Japanese and French views and experience were collected and quoted ; and the Nile Campaign examined and analysed from the point of view of transport by barge. The result of all this hard work was to convince Lovat's

Committee that 150,000 German troops might be embarked within thirty-six hours and be landed in Great Britain within seventy-four hours of the receipt of the order to act.

It is easy after the expected war is over without any invasion having taken place to laugh at the anxiety of Lovat and his friends; and there were not wanting at the time people who dubbed them "The Blue Funk School" in opposition to the better known "Blue Water School." But in their justification two things must be recalled. Firstly, the War took place in conditions unimaginably more favourable to ourselves than could have been foreseen beforehand. Not only was the Fleet fully mobilized and at its battle stations, thanks partly to good fortune and mainly to the wisdom and energy of Mr. Winston Churchill; but also we had powerful allies and friendly neutrals, such as Italy, on whom we could not possibly rely in 1907 or even in 1913. Secondly, the position at home changed greatly to our advantage between 1907 and 1914. Not only were the bases for our Fleet increased and strengthened, but the Territorial Force was created. And the strength of the Force was finally fixed at a figure far higher than was at first intended. That this change was largely due to the facts laid before the Committee of Imperial Defence by Lovat's Committee does not admit of doubt.

Though the Committee had fired its broadside in 1907, it remained in being and met occasionally to discuss the question of Imperial Defence. How active was Lovat will be seen from a letter to Colonel Repington written after the latter had had a bout with the redoubtable Lord Fisher.

"BEAUFORT CASTLE,  
BEAULY, N.B.

1.12.08.

MY DEAR REPINGTON,

I think you scored off the Fisherites severely—but I agree that for the future it should be most clearly brought out that it is not a personal battle. If Fisher is rude, which he certainly was, let him hang himself by putting himself out of sympathy with his Committee.



*Criticism.*

(I) I think you should not labour the '*work before declaration of war.*' They rather had you on that. Your point is, I think, that preparations can be begun :

- (a) At the army centres removed from the frontier.
- (b) At the sea ports removed from the frontier, e.g., Hamburg.
- (c) At the naval ports from which there is no leakage of news.

Your point is that the limit of time of action before War declaration is the limit of time taken in travelling in non-public (and therefore non-state-controlled) means of conveyance to the frontier.

At Emden, obviously a man can slip over in minutes to a free Post Office. At Hamburg, as our spies are probably of the non-motor-owning class, it is a question of hours.

Preparations at the German yards can be begun days beforehand. I know from the experience of others that every man at Wilhelmshaven is known to the Police. There is not a soul who arrives they don't find out about and the non-official class are practically non-existent.

The question of '*holding the Dover Straits for 48 hours.*'

This for (undecipherable) and other ignorant ones you must elaborate. (It is not a question of a 48 hours fight.) Now the initiative lies with the Germans ; therefore they are certain to take the time most difficult for a rapid concentration of superior naval force in the Channel. That is when cruisers and the Atlantic fleet are west of Ireland after a period of manoeuvre and therefore short of coal.

Show leave on shore (or time to coal) ; times for steaming to Rendezvous, danger of being taken in detail, ignorance of German position, place of rendezvous bound to be off the direct line. Finally a mine-strewn Channel ; a false landing at, say, Hull : a blind of all the big fast Hamburg liners, which will have completed their off loadings by Sat. p.m. ; lines cut on shore ; bogus wires ; difficulty of finding exact place of landing. Time for holding Channel in actual battle against organized attack by superior numbers

is probably nearer 6 than 48 hours : given Germans selected moment and action with intelligence.

Put in your evidence definitely 'We are 4 civilians who offer a plan, hampered by lack of knowledge, without access to latest German figures. Germans for years have been elaborating details and it is 1000 to 1 they have a better plan than we put forward. What we wish the Defence Committee to face is not our strategy but our facts ; not to examine our naval tactics but the Balfourian figures which the nation has been given as correct.'

*We must not be decoyed off this.*

There are one or two naval fallacies you must break into ; used by Slade before and no doubt used by them behind our backs again.

(I) *Massed Transports confusion and ramming, etc.*

This is 'bunkum' ; only the Royal Navy charge each other.

- (a) Crimea anchored 6 rows (sailing and steam) ; no damage done although they changed berth through French altering landing buoy (Kinglake).
- (b) McLellan in 60-66 War only lost 14 mules and some row boats ; although there was no organization for 130,000 men. For bad harbours and naval dangers *vide* Farraguts-statement.

(II) *Time of Landing.*

- (a) Crimea 52,000 in a day. (Swell started 2.56 p.m.)
- (b) 1830 Algiers 37,000 in one day.
- (c) Brazil 18,000 (5 hours) Cochrane.
- (d) Aboukir practice 6000 in 20 minutes.
- (e) German practice *vide* our papers.

(III) *Ram this home—Naval luminaries have always said landing anywhere was impossible.*

- (1) Pitt and impeachment of the Admiralty. (Rochefort.)
- (2) Napoleon and Aboukir ; threatens to hang Admiral B. (Napoleon and Egypt. Brown.)

- (3) Quebec. Wolfe barely able restrain the navy from quitting. (Chas. Johnston.)
- (4) 1830 at Algiers. Duperie chosen by Dauphin as greatest Naval dasher funks throughout and retires in the middle of landing.

#### IV. *Have a go on the 'Haute Politique.'*

We are now at our best in situation of '*Welt Politik*' for naval defence.

- (a) No necessity for battleships in the Pacific—(Russian fleet non-existent).
- (b) Only smallest fleet of modern times in the Mediterranean.
- (c) Nothing on the farther side Atlantic. Given Russia active or France doubtful—increase Mediterranean, increase Pacific. French Fleet Brest, German Baltic, and where are we?

Even if facts right to-day, how long would it take to educate a people lulled to sleep by balderdash? How long to make an Army when France has a hostile fleet in the Channel and Germany one in the North Sea; a situation which might conceivably arise?

I think your statement so good that I have underlined certain facts which must be brought out.

Why not cut out the more rabid portions, take the rest with you to the next meeting, read from it and they are sure to ask you for the paper—a Committee always loves a good appendix.

Yours ever,  
LOVAT.

On the subject of striking before declaration of war—quote Admiral Melchior *Défense des Côtes*—Captain Torbe and lectures quoted from *Ecole de Guerre* referring to the *idée fixe Anglaise* of impossibility of a bolt from blue.

On subject of concentration at the coast. In the French official account of the War of 1870 it gives that General Vogel von Falkstein (?) had ability to concentrate 240,000,

Landwehr and Regular divisions, at any threatened place of the coast in one day.

On German manœuvres they move 20,000 men in 12 to 16 hours and do not interfere with passenger traffic.

There is no question of return of empties. Hamburg alone has line accommodation for 160 unit trains of 550 yds.

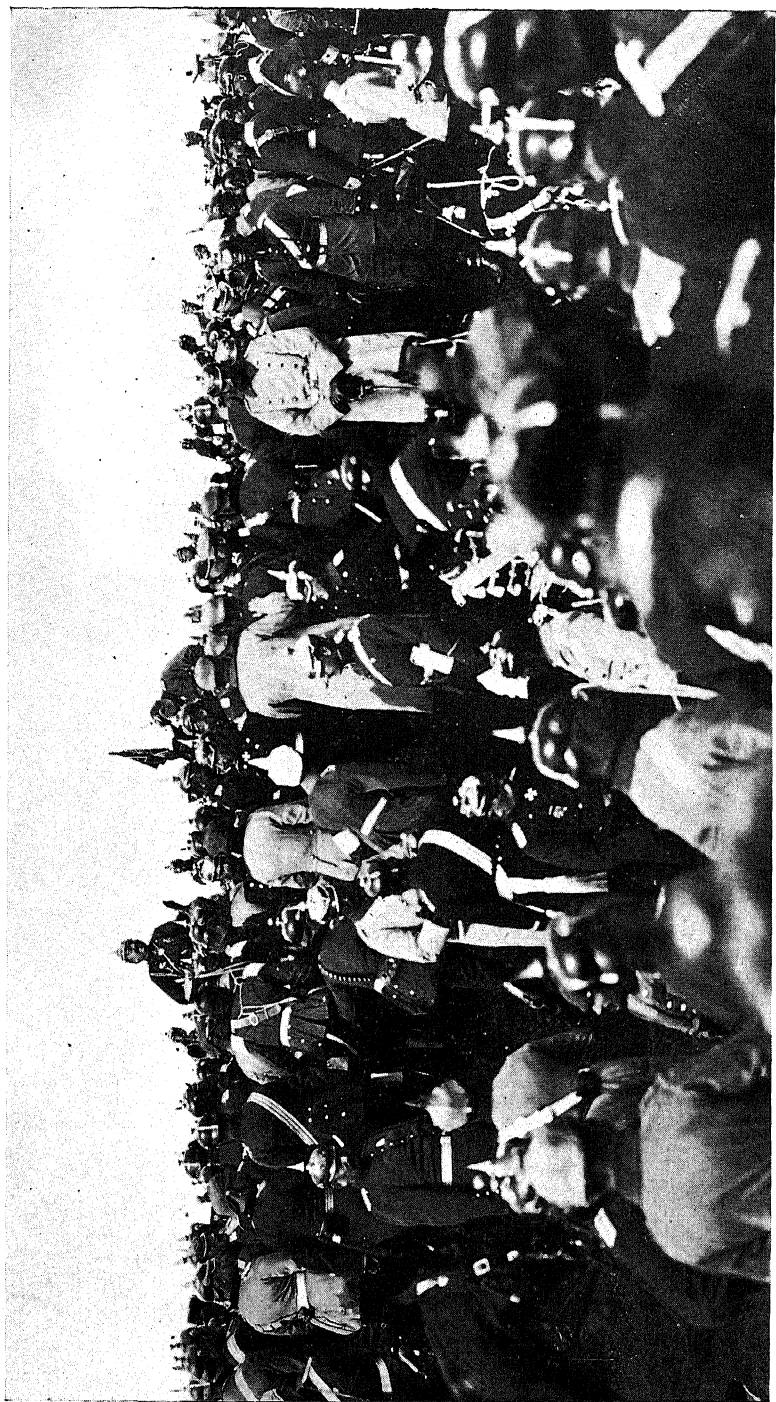
L."

The results were embodied in a second memorandum, less voluminous and important than the first, which was laid before the Sub-Committee of the Imperial Defence Committee in 1913 when the members of Lovat's Committee again attended and gave evidence. The new memorandum, after recalling the first one, took as its starting-point, a statement made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on July 29th, 1909, to the effect that "so long as the naval supremacy of this country was absolutely assured" invasion by 120,000 to 150,000 men was "absolutely impracticable." With regard to the military aspect of the problem, it was "the business of the War Office to see that we have under all circumstances a properly organized and properly equipped force capable of dealing effectually with a possible invasion of 70,000 men." The memorandum denied that either of the two conditions of safety were fulfilled and proceeded to call attention to a number of weaknesses and defects. The controversy is an old one and raises little interest now; but at the time it touched a burning question. Then, as now, the weakness of the Territorial Force, both in training and in numbers, was glaring; and then, as now, our relative weakness in the air alarming. An interesting point on which the memorandum dwelt was the result of the naval manœuvres of 1912 which had never been made public. Inside information on such matters is easy enough to come by for men like those who constituted the Committee; and they gave chapter and verse for their thesis that the invading force had been completely successful.

During the life of his Committee, Lovat was not content with second-hand information. He made several visits to Germany himself and was over that part of the coast which

figured in Erskine Childer's famous book *The Riddle of the Sands* which was written as a warning against invasion. He attended German grand manoeuvres at least once and returned deeply impressed by the strength of the German Army. Their discipline and their power of marching and of manoeuvre were beyond anything known at home ; and he brushed aside the "unreal" nature of the manoeuvres, of which much capital was made in the English press at the time, as of no significance. It was due to the presence of the Kaiser and a desire for spectacular effect which played no part in the conception of war held by the German General Staff. It is interesting to note that Mr. Charles Cruttwell, Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, in his recently published book, *A History of the Great War*, remarks on the reticence of German official writers and documents on this subject of invasion, and states that it was not attempted at the beginning of the War because the German High Command had no wish to prevent the British Expeditionary Force from going to France, where they expected to involve it in the speedy ruin of the French Army. It is also interesting from the psychological point of view that, while His Majesty's Government pooh-poohed the danger of invasion before the War when we were exposed to the greatest risks, they became unduly nervous of it when it had become a hopeless enterprise.

Apart from his work on this Committee, Lovat intervened constantly in the debates in the House of Lords on the subject of Defence. On July 25th, 1905, Lord Tweedmouth called attention to the continued deficiency in the numbers of officers in the British Army. This was a favourite theme of Lovat's, who pointed out over and over again that our forces must necessarily be greatly expanded in a serious war and that such expansion was impossible without trained officers. Moreover, under a voluntary system, the men must be led, not driven ; and nothing like the iron German discipline was applicable. The actual reserve at the time consisted of 17 Second Lieutenants, 100 First Lieutenants, amongst whom could be found Cabinet Ministers and others, and 600 to 800 Captains. It was difficult to estimate exact requirements ; but a fair estimate was that we were 10,000 officers short of what was needed. In the South African War



*German military manoeuvres*



there were 17 officers for the whole 4,500 gunners who were mobilized. After calling attention to the lack of consideration shown by the War Office to officers by constant and unnecessary changes, he dealt with the Staff. He foresaw that, unless a system was introduced which would give far more officers some Staff training, we should find numbers at the outset of the next war as we had in the South African War, when the forces were altogether inadequately provided with Staff officers. Finally he referred to the enormous shortage of officers on mobilization ; and first adumbrated in public the idea of the O.T.C., to which he devoted so much time, by giving it as his opinion that an appeal should be made to the universities and Public Schools.

The Officers' Training Corps became a body of such supreme value to the country in its hour of need that its origin is worth investigation. Many people claimed the honour of inventing it—so many indeed that it became a standing joke in the War Office, which decided that the true father of the Corps was the poet Milton. He had begotten it in his dissertation on education. However that may be, there is no doubt that Lovat held at Magdalen College, Oxford, in the autumn of 1902 a meeting at which was discussed the proper function of the Oxford and Cambridge Volunteers. And the meeting decided that their real use should be to serve as a nursery for officers. This was long before Haldane was ever heard of in connection with the Army ; and the President of Magdalen used always to aver that Lovat was the true father of the O.T.C. and that Haldane adopted it much later. That the latter was not particularly enamoured of the project at first is shown by his reluctance to come down to Oxford when it was decided to convert the Oxford University Rifle Volunteers into the Oxford University O.T.C. The President, who was Vice-Chancellor of the University at the time, had the greatest difficulty in persuading the Secretary of State to take the chair at the great meeting in the Town Hall at which the scheme was launched.

To fortify Lovat's claim further, there is his evidence given before the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers which was set up after the South African War. The memorandum embodying his recommendations is well



worth reading now that our defences have been again allowed to relapse into a desperate state of insufficiency. It is full of sound sense and useful suggestions ; but those which particularly interest us for the moment are under the heading : " Suggestions for reform. 1. Reserve of Officers. University Scheme." In this part of his memorandum Lovat goes very fully into the advantages of turning the University Volunteers into a school of future officers and into their peculiar fitness to act in that capacity. Other recommendations are the formation of a skeleton General Staff for the auxiliary forces on a war footing and the registration of various categories of men likely to be useful in their particular capacity in war. Recognizing that universal compulsory service was unacceptable to the public, Lovat made the novel suggestion that all young men of independent means and with no responsibilities should be obliged to serve in some capacity or other ; and, finally, in his " Conclusion " he reminded the Royal Commission that the South African War had taught us that " men " could be got readily and taught quickly, but that officers capable of leading could not easily be found or, when found, trained in a day.

On July 18th, 1907, Lovat asked the First Lord three questions as to the number of battleships which were fully manned, which had nucleus crews, and of what strength. These questions were connected with his anxiety regarding invasion and a statement made by the Under-Secretary of State for War in December, 1906, to the effect that British supremacy at sea precluded the possibility of any invasion by a force stronger than 10,000 men. The First Lord replied in detail and naturally made out the best case he could for the " Blue Water School " which denied the possibility of invasion. We have seen how Lovat's Committee was at pains to fight this school, and, in the debate which followed, Lovat produced, as hypotheses, a number of factors which the investigations of his Committee later proved to exist. In his calculations Lovat always took for granted that the element of surprise would be present ; and that a week-end would be chosen for German action. With this in mind, he told the House of Lords of a visit to Chatham on a Saturday and of the number of Bluejackets he saw

leave with return tickets till Monday ; and of another experiment he had made in telegraphing on a Saturday to commanders of Territorial troops to see how fast they could mobilize. These experiments had led him to believe that a force of 150,000 could be landed before our ships were ready for sea. He moved for facts and figures to substantiate the assertion of the Under-Secretary of State for War. As was to be expected, the First Lord was unwilling to give the facts and figures and the motion was withdrawn after a useful debate.

On November 23rd, 1908, Lord Roberts returned to the charge regarding the danger of invasion and asked that His Majesty's Government, following the precedent set by Mr. Balfour in 1905, should make a definite pronouncement on the subject. Lovat spoke in favour of the motion and again alluded to the results of his Committee's investigations, which were unknown to the public, regarding the possibility of quick embarkation from given ports. He pointed out that Mr. Balfour's declaration of 1905, even if sound at the time, which he did not admit, was altogether out of date ; and, as usual, he fortified his allegations with unchallenged historical examples. Mr. Balfour's statement had done infinite harm to recruiting and it was necessary to dispose of it authoritatively. These arguments were met from the Government side by counter-arguments into which it is unnecessary to go. Lord Cromer, with his usual good sense, deprecated asking the Government to be too precise at a time when the Bulgarian and Bosnian disputes already provided so much inflammable matter ; but expressed his own conviction that a strong Army was essential if our diplomacy was to be effective. After another debate of the highest value, a motion emphasizing the necessity of an Army strong enough to make the most formidable foreign nation hesitate to invade the Kingdom was passed by a large majority against Government opposition.

On May 24th, 1909, Lovat took part in another debate on Defence, and asked the Government what was the total number of combatants of all ranks in organized units available for the Central Home Defence Force after the Expeditionary Force and the garrisons for naval bases and defence areas had been deducted. He took it as agreed that the

Expeditionary Force would consist of six Infantry Divisions and one Cavalry Division, totalling in all 165,000 men. This was the minimum necessary for sending overseas either to implement the *Entente Cordiale* or to meet contingencies within the Empire. For fixed defences the number was defined by Mr. Balfour at 142,000 men plus garrison artillery, and the figure of 168,000 had been repeatedly mentioned as necessary to defend our ports, etc., now that the idea that the forces of invasion could not exceed those of a raid had been dropped. He then quoted Haldane, Secretary of State for War, who had said, in March, that the Navy could not count on stopping a force of 70,000 to 100,000 men. In 1905 the limited raid theory had held the field and there was no Central Defence Force. In 1908 a mobilization plan for such a force had been begun after the evidence produced by Lord Roberts before the Defence Committee. After Mr. Haldane's speech such a force had become a vital necessity. It was idle to imagine that the whole six divisions would not be sent abroad and, if they were, the remaining mixed mass of half-trained regulars and men from the Reserves without junior officers would not be worth 70,000 fighting men. Lovat then alluded to Haldane's magnificent work in organizing the Territorials, but complained that misleading figures of combatants had been given owing to insufficient training. The Government refused to give any figures on public grounds.

On July 12th, 1909, Lord Roberts opened the second reading of his National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, which never had any chance of passing as it contained the element of compulsion. Lovat supported it, though he would have preferred the Voluntary system and found a good many faults in detail. Its great merit was that it would develop the splendid organization laid down by Haldane and would provide a sufficiency of trained officers.

The next debate on Defence in which Lovat took part was on July 11th, 1910, when Lord Dartmouth called attention to the condition of the Territorial Force after two years of existence. Lovat was Chairman of the Invernesshire County Association and knew well the inadequacy of the training, especially of the officers. The artillery training, both of men and horses, was such that the gunners were no

force at all. Unless the Territorials were improved out of all recognition, no Government would dare send an expeditionary force out of the country.

On July 18th, Lord Portsmouth called attention to the inadequacy of the Territorial Army to defend the Kingdom now that it was agreed by the experts that the landing of a large hostile force was possible. Again Mr. Balfour's unfortunate pronouncement of 1905 was quoted, as well as Mr. Asquith's statement four years later that it was necessary to have a force capable of dealing effectively with an invasion of 70,000 men. It was on this latter point that Lovat concentrated, arguing that Mr. Asquith's *sine qua non* did not exist and that the figure of 70,000 men was already too small. Again on April 3rd, 1911, Lord Roberts called the attention of the House to the inadequate military arrangements for the defence of the United Kingdom and the Empire. For the first time the Secretary of State took part in a debate on defence in the House of Lords to which he had recently been raised. His organization was so greatly in advance of anything which had preceded it that he was in a strong position; and he rightly called attention to the impossibility of preparing against all attacks which were physically possible. The correct method was to consider the reasonably probable. Speaking with moderation and recognizing the sincerity of his opponents, Lord Haldane admitted the shortcomings of Territorial training and argued that it was only after mobilization that the force could be properly trained. For this there would be time even in the event of a sudden war. In any case, this system was preferable to any form of compulsory service. The debate was a full one, and Lovat, leaving it to his friend, Lord Willoughby de Broke, to deal with the question of horses, denied that Lord Roberts was unreasonable in wishing to be prepared against all contingencies. For history proved that the friend of to-day was the enemy of to-morrow and vice versa. The assumption that the Territorial Army would have six months in which to train after the outbreak of war was more than rash.

On February 10th, 1913, Lord Midleton called the attention of the Government to the condition of the Territorial Force and asked whether they were satisfied that

it could defend the country in the absence of the Expeditionary Force. Lovat spoke with the utmost earnestness on this occasion and, for the first time as far as is known, expressed himself definitely as a believer in compulsory service. No one had tried harder to bring his own Territorial corps to efficiency and it is unlikely that any had succeeded so well. His words were heard with close attention and certain passages are worth quoting :

“ I am one of those who believe in compulsory service and I absolutely disclaim what the noble Lord said against us on this question. I have, I think, worked possibly as hard as most people on this question. . . . An absence of sergeants and an absence of training in the men make it almost impossible to have any military evolution carried out in a way which would give any confidence, and if you have not confidence in success, you can have no hope of winning. We are not allowed, and very rightly so, to manœuvre in large numbers ; yet at the outbreak of war we shall have to and how is it to be done ? A good many of the men have never been in camp at all. . . . Then, it is a fact that the Territorial Army has not been treated seriously by the Military Administration for the last four years. Before the Territorial Army was formed there was an Association of Commanding Officers who had worked at reforms, all going towards efficiency. We had some four or five of them put through before 1906. There were 14 in 1906 and eleven of these reforms have still to be effected. For four years now the Territorial Army have asked for arms so that they may be armed against invasion. They have never yet received the necessary arms. We have never had a drill book except one that is obsolete. We have never had a school for our Yeomanry Officers. . . . According to the experience of those in another place all that is cared about is to produce numbers. . . . Our Territorial Army is the worst armed force in Europe. It has the worst rifle. The cavalry have no sword or bayonet or anything ; and the Artillery have a useless gun—a machine-gun that is obsolete. The training is inefficient because these questions are neglected. There is bad work ; and you could not expect otherwise from the Territorial Army. . . . Having seen what happened in the Boer War, the present state of things is inexplicable. . . .

1400 men to a single officer were assembled in some of the Barracks. You will have your Territorial Army, and no efficient Officers because of the Officers going to the Expeditionary Force. . . . Does any noble Lord think we would be in a position to guarantee the safety of this country if the Expeditionary Force went abroad ? ”

The last time Lovat spoke in the House of Lords before the War on the subject of Defence was on April 17th, 1913, on the second reading of the Army (Amendment) Bill. He then put down a notice calling attention to the deficiencies in the land forces as organized under the Army Scheme of 1907, asking what steps His Majesty's Government proposed to take to remedy these deficiencies and why the reference to the recently appointed sub-committee of Imperial Defence had been confined to the single issue of invasion. The Turkish defeat in the Balkans had surprised military pundits, who are so often a generation behind the times ; and Lovat was right when he said that the Turkish downfall had disquieted those who relied on bravery and improvization for efficiency in war. The Council of County Associations had passed a resolution to the effect that, in spite of extraordinary efforts to obtain recruits, the deficiency was such that it could only be made up by an alteration in the conditions of service ; and 75 per cent of the commanding officers of the Territorial Army agreed that the present training was insufficient. After calling attention to the recent reduction in our naval superiority, he turned to the air and correctly noted the fact that dirigibles, of which about two dozen existed already in Germany, were suitable only for naval scouting and flights over the sea. Their existence further diminished our naval margin of safety. Always a lukewarm, not to say rebellious, party-man, Lovat objected to Mr. Balfour being on the Committee to the exclusion of Lord Curzon and others. That unfortunate speech of 1905 was never forgotten ; and Lovat referred to it as often as he did because he knew that, whatever His Majesty's Government might say officially, the “ Blue Water School ” and even the “ dinghy ” brigade still prevailed. And it was his nightmare that, if war broke out, we should not be allowed either by public opinion or by the Government to play our part with the full Expeditionary Force.

Ministers are inevitably inclined to make statements calculated to soothe the electorate, and to quote figures which, though not strictly speaking faked, produce very different feelings in the minds of the uninstructed and of the expert. Lovat had no mercy for such weaknesses, and exposed the real state of affairs which lay behind recent statements of the Secretary of State for War regarding aeroplanes and Reserves. During all these alarums and excursions we find the number 70,000 constantly turning up as that of the invading force to be repelled. The origin of the figure was curious, as Lovat pointed out. Lord Roberts had mentioned it as the minimum any enemy would send ; and it was believed that the Admiralty had accepted it as the biggest force they could imagine able to elude them. As a matter of fact the Admiralty admitted no possibility of serious invasion.

No account of Lovat's Parliamentary activities during this period would be complete without mentioning the Parliament Bill. Like the vast majority of the Unionist peers he had voted against the Lloyd George Budget. However objectionable in principle this famous Budget may have been—and it is a fact that it inaugurated that system of wholesale bribery of the electorate which has now taken the place of the more obvious but less insidious individual bribery of earlier days—it was an act of political folly to vote against it. For, as the late Lord Cromer did not fail to point out at the time, one of the few things which the British public thinks about the Constitution is that the House of Lords has nothing to do with finance ; and no good could possibly come from forcing an election on that issue. The rejection of the Budget, to which Lovat merely contributed his vote, gave rise to the Parliament Bill and a controversy in which he took an extremely active part.

The story of the passing of this Bill has been told by many writers far more competent than I ; but the more picturesque details touching the "Die-hard" opposition to it have yet to be fully revealed. Lovat convinced himself that it would be better for the country to force the Constitutional issue to its logical conclusion than to agree to the Bill. If the former course were taken he believed that a reformed and influential Second Chamber must follow, whereas the passage of the Bill would mean in practice

single-Chamber Government for good and all. He faced the possibility of a vast addition to the peerage with equanimity, holding that it would make reforms of the Upper Chamber inevitable.

With these convictions, Lovat had no patience with the official Leaders of the Opposition and threw himself with enthusiasm into Lord Halsbury's camp. Acting as his principal Whip and aided by his own old Oxford friend, Lord Willoughby de Broke, he went out into the bye-ways and hedges and beat up a number of peers who hardly knew where the House of Lords was situated. It was then that the "Die-hards" and the "Backwoodsmen" were first heard of; and that the term "Ditcher" was applied to those noble Lords who preferred to perish in the last ditch rather than sit on the fence like their official leaders, the "Hedgers."

Lovat enjoyed this struggle immensely and did more than any other single man to persuade one hundred and fourteen peers to leave their rural pursuits in order to pass a day on the red benches of the House of Lords. The Government could only muster seventy Liberal peers, and consternation grew as one unknown man after another was shepherded in by Lovat and Willoughby de Broke. The issue was in doubt till the last moment, when a sufficient number of Unionist peers were persuaded to sacrifice themselves to what they, in their turn, were told was their duty to the country.

It is safe to say that nearly all of those who voted against the Parliament Bill were the most convinced Diehards on the subject of Ireland. But, for all his violence on the former issue, Lovat never had the true Diehard mentality. He was too anxious to make any system work and too little swayed by theoretical considerations to make a reliable Diehard; and the beating up of the Backwoodsmen, though due primarily to his belief that it was necessary in the interests of the Constitution to force the issue, was not without the attraction of a sport to a man who had lost little of his undergraduate high spirits. There was no trace of this irresponsibility in his attitude towards Ireland.

It is apt to be forgotten that, in the first half of 1914, the Irish question was more vividly before the public of England as a whole and the politicians in particular than was the



possibility of being involved in war. To such a degree is this true that, when I heard towards the end of July, 1914, that a friend of mine, then in Norway, had been asked to be ready to rejoin the Essex Yeomanry, I fully believed the reason to be that the regular cavalry regiment stationed at Colchester had been ordered to Ireland. To loyal Catholics such as Lovat, the whole Irish tangle was distasteful in the extreme. Like so many others of his kind, his father had left the Liberal Party ; and Lovat's devotion to the Crown and to the Empire made it impossible for him to regard the policy of Home Rule and the outrages perpetrated by the Fenians and other Irish with anything but detestation. On the other hand, the religious passions introduced into the struggle by Orangemen and their often scandalous attacks on his religion alienated his natural sympathy for that side. The dilemma gave him many searchings of heart, but, with civil war growing more probable every day, a choice had to be made ; and he deliberately decided that, if the worst came to the worst, he would fight for the Ulster Loyalists.

In March Lovat took part in a debate in the House of Lords which dealt only with the anomalies and uncertainties involved in the correspondence between General Sir Arthur Paget, G.O.C. in Ireland, and his officers. By July the situation had got much more critical and the Government, faced with the probability and not merely the possibility of civil war, were forced in the hope of averting it to amend their Home Rule Bill by leaving Ulster, or rather certain counties of Ulster, out of the Home Rule area for a period of six years if Ulster so desired. The debate on the Amendment Bill was of a high order, and on July 1st the Archbishop of York had proposed that it should be passed by the House of Lords as a temporary measure and that a Statutory Commission should be appointed to devise some permanent remedy for the Irish difficulty. Taking his cue on this proposal, Lovat on the following day made an earnest and reasoned appeal to the House of Lords to put aside Party politics in the face of a national danger and to find a compromise. After appealing to his old friend, Lord Willoughby de Broke, not to divide the House against the Bill, he recommended as an essential first preliminary to any advance

that there should be a Conference of the two Front Benches. Recent history had proved that, so long as the Irish Party were in a position to turn the scale in the House of Commons, they would not listen to proposals which they were glad to accept when in a weaker tactical position. To those who objected that a Conference between the Party Leaders was an impossibility, he would reply that there was an undertaking between the Leaders when it came to a question of war; and surely a civil war was as grave a danger as a foreign one. The English nation had dropped Party politics in the Boer War and other periods to face a common danger. Surely they could do so when every victory won by either side would be a disaster and every brave action would be a crime. The Government Bills had received meagre support in the House of Lords even from those on the Government benches, and Lovat suggested that the time had come when they should be dropped and the Unionist Party should admit that the better government of Ireland should be taken in hand. In a later speech he urged that the counties of Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan, with their large Catholic majorities, should be excluded from Ulster.

As is known, a Conference did take place on the King's invitation later in July. But it included the southern Irish and the Ulster protagonists as well as the English Party Leaders. It was thus quite different to the Conference proposed by Lovat, and, as there had been no preliminary preparation, it never had the smallest chance of succeeding.

## CHAPTER VI

THE GROUSE COMMISSION. SALMON FISHERIES. FIRST VISIT TO CANADA.  
THE SUDAN PLANTATION SYNDICATE.

1904-1914

IN order to make Lovat's work on Defence comprehensible it was necessary to carry the last chapter right up to the outbreak of the Great War ; and the impression may have been created that the subject absorbed all his time and energy during the period between the two wars in which he took part. This was far from being the case. It was at once his strength and his weakness to take up simultaneously a number of enterprises, any single one of which would have been sufficient to satisfy a man of ordinary energy. This idiosyncrasy often annoyed his friends ; and it has been an embarrassment to his biographer, who lacks the experience and skill to weave the many divergent threads of his life into a harmonious piece of literary stuff. The attempt must be made, and the next two chapters will deal with Lovat's principal activities and interests during the all too short respite between 1902 and 1914.

People unacquainted with the Highlands and their economy will be surprised to find how much time and energy Lovat expended on the life history of the Red Grouse (*Tetrao Scoticus*) ; and a word of explanation for the benefit of the uninitiated seems in place. This bird has the distinction of being the only one on our list which is found exclusively in the British Isles in a natural state. It was, before the War, introduced into the heathy parts of Belgium and Germany, where its descendants may still possibly be found ; but, in a wild state, it is represented abroad by a closely allied species, the Willow Grouse (*Tetrao Albus*), which is distributed throughout the circumpolar regions of the Old

and the New World and, unlike the British bird, turns white in winter. Ever since the first half of last century when that immortal work *Tommiebegs Shootings* was written, sportsmen have been attracted to the North by the prospect of shooting grouse; and the increased facilities of travel have served, not merely to attract English sportsmen in ever greater numbers, but to bring over wealthy rivals from France and the United States. Before the War, the rent of a grouse-moor was usually reckoned at one pound sterling a brace, which included the use of a furnished shooting lodge, the pay of gamekeepers and any varied sport and fishing which the moor provided. Thus a moor expected to yield five hundred brace of grouse would let for £500—a sum far in excess of what the land was worth for any other purpose. In short, the grouse not merely enabled many Highland lairds to retain properties they would otherwise have had to sell, but it paid the bulk of the rates and gave a deal of healthy employment during the shooting season.

Now this bird, on which the prosperity of the Highlands largely depended (and depends), has always been known to be subject to great periodical fluctuations in numbers; and it was to elucidate the cause of these fluctuations, which affected so intimately the life of the Highlands, that Lovat bestirred himself. The curious may find an analogy in the history of the herring. For it is known that the prosperity of the Hanseatic Powers was founded on that prolific fish, which contributed to their decline by capriciously leaving the Baltic for good and all. No Hansa Lovat could have prevented that disaster; but it was not unreasonable to hope that, in the case of the grouse, remedies might be found once the causes of mortality were ascertained.

Grouse disease was a favourite topic for speculation at Beaufort, but it was not till 1904 that Lovat got together a Committee of Enquiry to investigate the subject. Amongst the gentlemen who attended the first meeting, at which Lovat was elected Chairman, was the Marquis of Tullibardine, Mackintosh of Mackintosh and Mr. R. C. Munro Ferguson (later, Lord Novar). The Earl of Onslow, President of the Board of Agriculture, was next approached, with the result that, in April, 1905, the Committee was formally appointed as a Departmental Committee of the Board, and

Lord de Grey and Lord Henry Scott were added to it. Dr. William Somerville represented the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. No public money was to be spent on the enquiry, and funds were raised by an appeal to owners and tenants of grouse moors, which was successful enough to encourage the Committee to invite a number of scientists to assist and to appoint a body of local correspondents in various parts of the country. Attaching, as always, the first importance to the personal element, Lovat chose these correspondents with great care, and they fully justified his judgment. Consisting mainly of resident proprietors, estate agents and gamekeepers, the official correspondents numbered about three hundred ; and many other proprietors and gamekeepers corresponded regularly with the Committee.

But correspondents, however eager, required instruction. "Starting from scratch," though a favourite method amongst Englishmen who ought to know better, did not appeal to Lovat, who circulated to the correspondents an illustrated pamphlet giving a short summary of the life-history of the bird together with a description of "grouse disease" as then recognized. Various theories already held the field and these the pamphlet discussed, whilst it explained the lines upon which the Committee proposed to work. Experiments in feeding, etc., are difficult to perform on birds in a wild state and an observation area with grouse in captivity was established in Surrey. A constant supply of healthy grouse was kept up every month in the year in order to enable the Committee to collect accurate information as to feeding, moulting, seasonal changes, etc. Many hundreds of such birds were examined, and over six hundred grouse-skins were prepared and exhibited at the Royal Society in May, 1909, and at the Vienna Sports Exhibition of 1910.

Those who visited Beaufort during the years during which the Committee worked will not easily forget the enthusiasm with which Lovat inspired his many helpers ; nor will they be surprised at the success of the result. *The Grouse in Health and in Disease* was finally published in 1911. It remains the last word on an important subject ; and has become the text-book for continental sportsmen and scientists interested in the closely related Willow Grouse. In 1912 the publication of a popular edition placed the salient results

of the investigations and chapters on the various aspects of practical moor management in the hands of every game-keeper in the Highlands. These chapters, written almost entirely by Lovat himself, are full not only of the results of the investigations, but also of the writer's exceptional personal knowledge of his subject. They include accounts of the methods employed on some of the most prolific moors in the Highlands and deal with the problem of heather-burning, the depredations of the heather beetle, keepers and keeping, enemies both furred and feathered and the proper stock to be left on the ground. They are still proving their value to all those who own or rent a grouse moor. The introduction of the book, which Lovat also wrote himself, contains a passage which well illustrates his methods and outlook :

"During the whole enquiry the Committee has been greatly hampered by lack of funds. The total income has never amounted to £1000 in any one year, and the work would have been in danger of coming to an end were it not that many members of the scientific staff have given their services gratuitously or for at most a nominal consideration.

What success the Committee have met with is due to several causes. Firstly, the work was, in the main, directed by small sub-committees who were unhampered by official restrictions and untrammelled by traditional red tape. Secondly, the Chairman and the Secretary had the cordial support not only of the other members of the Committee, but of all those directly or indirectly interested in the Grouse. Thirdly, the members of the scientific staff took the keenest interest in the problems they sought to solve, and were willing to place their knowledge, their spare time, and their technical skill at the disposal of the Committee unremunerated, or at best remunerated at an entirely inadequate scale. Fourthly, the Inquiry aroused a certain public spirit, which not only found expression in the willingness of sportsmen, landlords, keepers, and others to do all in their power to assist the work of the Committee, but led the printers, the firm which supplied the paper upon which the book is printed, the publishers and many others connected with the preparation of the volume, to grant the Committee the most favourable terms.

That this Inquiry did not cost more than the small sum of £4366 in the six years over which the work extended (averaging £727 a year) is due to the causes set forth above, and to the constant vigilance and unselfish insistence on economy on the part of the Secretary. Compared with the cost of similar Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees this sum is a mere trifle, but it shows that satisfactory results *can* be attained at very small expense. Much money was of course saved by not printing the evidence given at the numerous examinations of gamekeepers and others held by the Committee. Such evidence is, as a rule, printed in full, and remains unheeded and unread in tons of neglected Blue-Books. Then again, the money has been carefully and laboriously collected, for the Committee were precluded by the terms of their reference from drawing on the purse of the taxpayer. This also made for economy."

Had anyone but Lovat written the Introduction, it is safe to say that the organization, the unselfish devotion and the strict regard for economy, to which he credits the success of the Committee, would all have been ascribed to the example and the inspiration of the Chairman. The whole investigation is, indeed, an object-lesson of what it is possible for a single-minded and exceptional man to achieve with small expenditure. For it was not possible even to establish a central laboratory. Work was done at Cambridge, at the London School of Tropical Medicine, at the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, at Frimley in Surrey, at King's School in the Isle of Man, in the offices of the *Field* in London and in the gun-room at Beaufort.

Lovat always spoke with such feeling of the unselfish help that he received during this piece of work that it is only fair to his memory to mention two of those most closely associated with him. He himself mentions many more, but it would overload this book to follow his example. First and foremost was Dr. Edward Wilson, who later became known to the world for his heroic participation in the fate of Captain Scott in the Antarctic. Of him and of Dr. Shipley Lovat writes :

"Edward A. Wilson, M.B., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., was appointed, in November, 1905, principal Field Observer, Anatomist and Physiologist to the Inquiry, and devoted his

whole time to the work till the autumn of 1910, when he joined Captain Scott's Antarctic Expedition as Scientific Director on the *Terra Nova*. It is difficult to speak highly enough of Dr. Wilson's services, for not only was he an indefatigable worker in the field, but his ornithological knowledge, his scientific training, and his artistic skill, have been of the utmost value in every branch of the Inquiry. Practically every Grouse which was submitted to the Committee for examination was dissected and reported on by Dr. Wilson, and the results of these dissections, as shown in Appendix D, not only form a record of long and patient labour, but also provide an enormous mass of carefully arranged material which has been of great use to the Committee. Dr. Wilson has written or aided in writing ten out of the first fourteen chapters of the book, and has not only fully illustrated his own contributions, but has placed his artistic skill at the disposal of nearly all the other writers. In addition to his services as Field Observer and Physiologist, Dr. Wilson conducted a series of experiments on live Grouse at the Committee's Observation Area whereby the results obtained by Dr. Leiper, Dr. Shipley and others were put to the test; these experiments entailed some years of hard and patient work, and required the closest co-operation with the other members of the Scientific Staff. Dr. Wilson's personal qualities secured for him the willing assistance alike of Local Correspondents and Scientific Staff, and went far to ensure whatever success the Committee has achieved.

A. E. Shipley, M.A., Hon. D.Sc., F.R.S., Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, and Reader in Zoology in the University of Cambridge, undertook in June, 1905, to assist the Committee in the Scientific Departments of their research, especially in connection with the investigations of the ectoparasites and endoparasites of Grouse. Dr. Shipley's services to the scientific side of the Inquiry have been as important as Dr. Wilson's services to the natural history side. Dr. Shipley has published the results of his labours in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London for 1909 in the following series of articles: (1) The Tapeworms (cestoda) of the Red Grouse; (2) The Threadworms (nematoda) of the Red Grouse; (3) The Ectoparasites of the Red Grouse; (4) The Internal Parasites of



Birds allied to the Grouse. The first three of these papers are, by the courtesy of the Zoological Society of London, reprinted with minor alterations in the present Report. Dr. Shipley has also acted as one of the Publishing Sub-Committee of the Inquiry, and has given much assistance in the revisal of the proofs and the preparation of Interim and Final Reports for the Press."

The Salmon fisheries are hardly less important to the economy of the Highlands than are grouse; and it was during this period that Lovat took their improvement seriously in hand. They had always been a good source of income to the Beaufort Estate, but had been subject to fluctuations which, taken over a period of years, denoted a severe fall in productivity. Few questions rouse more prejudice and passion than does that of the causes of the diminution of the salmon supply. In Norway it is a political question of the first order and the fisheries suffer proportionately. In Scotland, fortunately, few votes are involved, though even here the fact that taking off nets reduces employment has done great harm to at least one river. Those who wish for the highest immediate advantages cloak their indifference to the future in the argument that the natural reproductivity of salmon is such that no netting has a serious effect on it. And it is a fact that the variations in the supply of salmon can by no means always be explained by the amount of netting that is taking place. But common sense indicates that the supply over a series of years, sufficiently long to even out seasonal effects, must depend on the stock of spawning salmon in the rivers. If this is unduly reduced, whether by netting, the depredations of seals or the voracity of cormorants and other birds amongst the young fish, the result must inevitably be a falling off in the productivity of the river.

Such was Lovat's view about the Beaully and he set himself to put matters right. He started a salmon hatchery, to which a second was added later, and he gradually increased their capacity to nearly two million ova a year, of which about 95 per cent hatch out. Here again there is a conflict of opinion; some people holding that a hatchery does little good, and that the fish, if left to themselves, do as well as when stripped by hand. The truth is that a badly managed

hatchery does in fact more harm than good and that a very small one is of little value. But Lovat was influenced a good deal by experience in British Columbia and the United States, where hatcheries on a gigantic scale had effected wonders. And he always maintained, though admitting it was impossible of proof, that his own hatcheries had done much to restore the Beaulieu.

After the hatcheries, came the more complicated question of the nets. These consisted of both sea and estuary nets and the nets in the rivers; and it was necessary to deal with them on an extensive scale if any result was to be obtained. So Lovat persuaded all the principal East Coast proprietors from Balintore in Rosshire to Burghead on the south side of the Moray Firth to form a company and buy up the whole of the sea nets. The company was to reduce the number of nets and work the rest as a commercial proposition, but with strict regard to the supply of fish. The river nets would still be worked by the proprietors themselves who, in return for the advantage they got from the reduction of the sea-nets, undertook to reduce the amount of netting done. He himself would, in order to help the company, forgo all netting on his fishings in the Beaulieu estuary and would restrict the netting in the river to not more than two days a week during June and July from 1910 to 1928. The scheme has worked well and no one but Lovat could have put it through.

In connection with this Company Lovat made an interesting experiment, the failure of which is not without its lessons. Struck, as so many have been and still are, by the discrepancy between the wholesale price of salmon received by the Company and the retail price paid by the consumer in London where all the fish went, he decided to make a determined effort to bridge the gulf. With his enormous acquaintance and "contacts," to use a fashionable and over-worked word, he seemed particularly well equipped for the struggle with vested interests and well-entrenched corruption, which was bound to be severe. Having got together a small band of energetic collaborators, he made the round of the hotels, clubs and big restaurants in London and offered them salmon at the price the Company was then getting from the wholesalers. Of all these, Messrs. Lyons were the only considerable concern to close with his offer. Chefs, managers

and head-waiters unanimously complained that the fish was inferior and would have none of it. It was useless that, after the first refusals, he had every fish marked with the date of its being caught and landed, and that his enraged agents pointed out these marks to the complaining chefs. The fish might be, and often was, not twenty-four hours out of the water. It was rejected as stale none the less inexorably. This experience so exasperated Lovat that in revenge he forced the wholesalers to take ten boxes of white fish from the Company for every box of salmon they got. They could not do without salmon and the white fish was less easy to get rid of.

We have seen that he had a family interest in the Dominions owing to the action of his kinsman, General Simon Fraser, in raising from amongst his clansmen a force which distinguished itself in the conquest of Canada under Wolfe. The city of Quebec, hard by the Heights of Abraham where the decisive engagement took place, was founded in 1608 by Samuel de Champlain—a man famous for his military and administrative genius, no less than for his fidelity to his Church. And it is characteristic of French Canada and French Canadians that it was his religious renown that first gave rise to the idea of celebrating the tercentenary of the foundation of the city. Originating thus amongst the Catholic clergy of Quebec, the plan was taken up and developed by the Canadian Government at Ottawa and by Earl Grey, the Governor-General, until it became a Dominion-wide celebration in which should disappear what still remained of the racial asperities between British and French Canadians. It was the period when "pageants" were something of a rage at home, and it may be that the unrivalled setting of the Plains of Abraham first suggested the suitability of a pageant as part of the festivities. In any case, the happy idea occurred to someone that the descendants or family representatives of those who were identified both with the foundation of the city and with the historic struggle for its possession should be the guests of the Canadian Government for the duration of the celebration. It was thus that Lovat was invited, as were French representatives of the families of de Levis and Montcalm and Mr. George Wolfe, the Hon. Arthur Murray of Elibank, Lord Bruce (now Earl of Elgin) and the Hon. Dudley Carleton (now Lord Dorchester) from Great Britain.

Besides these, there were official representatives of France, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland ; and unofficial guests, such as the Duke of Norfolk, who were specially identified with the spiritual side of the celebrations. Lord Roberts was there to represent the Army ; and the presence of the Prince of Wales, now King George V, marked the celebrations as being of the first Imperial importance.

Clansmen and other Highlanders in Canada were not slow to show their traditional characteristics as soon as Lovat's forthcoming visit was announced ; and amongst the addresses of welcome which it was proposed to present was one by the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, of which Lord Strathcona, then Canadian High Commissioner in London, was Honorary Patron. Lord Saltoun, of the Aberdeenshire branch of the Frasers, somehow heard of this address and protested to Lord Strathcona against the official invitation being sent to Lovat as " Chief of the Clan Fraser." The claim of Lord Saltoun to be Chief of the Clan was not a new one, but is difficult for a mere Englishman to understand. As we have seen, the Frasers of Lovat settled in Invernesshire some time in the thirteenth century, and another branch settled in Aberdeenshire about the same time. Lord Saltoun was head of this latter branch, which may possibly be the elder ; but granting it is, that has nothing to do with the Chiefship of the Clan, since there never have been any clans in the lowlands of Aberdeenshire. The clan system flourished only over a small part of Scotland of which Invernesshire was the most important county. In the rest of the country, the great families practically ruled their particular neighbourhoods as, indeed, they did in earlier times in England. The distinction was well known to the late Duke of Atholl, himself the head of the powerful Murray family, as he showed on one occasion by his reply to an impertinent question. At Lovat's coming of age, the addresses, referring as they did to Highland customs, became tedious to some of the more frivolous guests from the south, who concocted an address, hailing Lovat as " Conqueror of all the Scottish Clans and most of the English ones." One of the authors of this document asked the Duke how he liked the reference to himself ; to which His Grace replied majestically : " We are not a clan."

But to return to Lord Saltoun's protest, which illustrates the importance attached by Highlanders to the honour of Chiefship. Lord Strathcona, originally a Forres man, had heard of Lord Saltoun's pretensions in his youth and, accepting them as valid, forwarded them to the Canadian Government with some observations of his own. The Canadian Government consulted Lord Grey, who, connecting the protest with his own vague recollections of the quite unrelated lawsuit, thought there might be something in it; and the final upshot was that Lord Strathcona had the words "Chief of the Clan Fraser" deleted from this particular address. In all others, and there were many, Lovat was welcomed in his proper part.

There was another hitch of an amusing kind in Lovat's reception. To the Clan Fraser Society occurred the idea that a small uniformed bodyguard of some fifty Frasers should be organized. The number expanded to a hundred; and the Central Committee of the celebrations, struck by the possibilities of a picturesque feature, requested that, instead of a bodyguard, six to seven hundred men, at least, should be accoutred as Fraser Highlanders of 1763 and led in person by Lovat at the pageant. The prospect was certainly inspiring, but, as so often, "*le mieux est l'ennemi du bien.*" The Central Committee would supply no funds for their own enterprise; though they intimated that something might be done if, instead of real Frasers properly equipped as Highlanders, the Society would content themselves with supers in Highland dress from the New York theatres. Outraged by the suggestion, the Secretary to the Society telegraphed to Lovat to stop the whole movement. He had already provided some twenty uniforms of the period which he brought out with him in the hope of making the Fraser representation complete by equipping some Fraser descendants of the original settlers whom General Simon Fraser had left behind him. But though there were plenty of Frasers of a later day, Lovat found it impossible to unearth any authentic descendants of General Fraser's force. He said at the time that they had been completely absorbed into the French Canadian community and had lost all memory of their origin. This development is an interesting illustration of the power of religion, as against race. For it is not doubtful that the

French Canadians owe their separate entity, as do the Irish in the United States, to the fact that they are Catholics. Had they been Protestants, they would both long ago have been merged into the general population by inter-marriage ; and the Frasers who settled after the conquest of Quebec would not have become " Frenchified." Since Lovat brought no pipers with him, the representation of General Simon Fraser and his regiment was confined to himself.

The party were in high spirits on board the *Empress of France* and some thought the coming functions would be well started by a practical joke on one of the representatives. A young victim was chosen and, by arrangement, a sheaf of messages of welcome were received on board and handed round. Those to Lord Roberts, Lovat and the rest were plain messages of welcome ; but the victim's bore the request that he would receive a deputation at Rimouski. Proud of this distinction, the young man naturally showed the telegram to his friends, who advised him to wear uniform for the occasion. A frock coat was thought more suitable ; and the Hon. Dudley Carleton, prime mover in the whole business, insidiously offered himself as A.D.C. and wore a second frock coat to the unusual accompaniment of brown shoes. After much secret consultation, it was decided that the Mayor and Mayoress of Rimouski should form the deputation ; and with the help of a dress dinner-jacket, opera hat and heavy brass curtain chain from which was suspended an enormous plaque, Mr. Maxwell, of the *Daily Mail*, was thought admirably to fill the part of Mayor. The Mayoress required more thought, and Lord Bruce would scarcely have cut such a pleasing figure had not Lady Beatrice Pole Carew provided him not only with the absolutely essential female clothes, but also with a couple of veils and a bewitching curl. Cosmetics were less fashionable in 1908 than now ; and a few touches by the representative of *The Illustrated London News*, applied on the advice of Lord Roberts and the Duke of Norfolk, soon disguised the masculinity of a Scots complexion.

A few friends (?) supported the victim in the Children's Saloon where they awaited the deputation which Captain Kincaid Smith was to receive at the gangway. Shortly after arrival at Rimouski, the Mayor and Mayoress were ushered in, and the former delivered, with some difficulty, a brilliant

speech of welcome. Outraged by the unseemly behaviour of the "friends," who were unable to suppress their guffaws, the victim replied with more than the usual dignity and, refusing any refreshment, the deputation withdrew. So completely successful was the hoax that, when Lord Bruce sat down rather late to lunch he was greeted with the remark : "I say, Bruce, where have you been? You missed the best thing in your life. That Mayoress was a treat."

Practical jokes are not to be commended if only because the clearing up is apt to be painful ; and the Captain of the *Empress of France* insisted that this one must be cleared up before anyone left the ship. His reason was that the wireless operator on board the ship had been implicated in the joke. A Captain must be obeyed on board his own ship, but no one was found willing to bell the cat. So the chief conspirator had to do it himself, and he got out of his difficulty by saying casually to the victim at lunch, pointing to Lord Bruce and Mr. Maxwell : "I say, allow me to introduce you to the Mayoress of Rimouski and the Mayor." The jokers got off much better than they deserved, for their dupe took the affair with great good-humour and showed no resentment later.

The Quebec pageant, with its accompaniment of Red Indians in their feathers and war-paint, and reviews of troops on the historic Plain of Abraham, was a well-managed success of which both the Canadian Government and the Governor-General could be proud. In the intervals between the official functions Lovat was busy looking up the French descendants of his clansmen, calling on the Catholic Archbishop and lunching with the 48th Highlanders of Toronto, considered the crack infantry regiment of Canada. An extensive programme had been prepared for him by Colonel Alexander Fraser, who had himself been as far west as Victoria to make the necessary arrangements, but Lovat had to be back in Scotland by August 20th, so he was unable to fulfil it in its entirety. His first visit was to Nova Scotia, where he stayed with the Lieutenant-Governor, who was a clansman, and addressed the Canadian Club at Halifax. It was the first of many addresses to Canadians, and in it he struck the note of sane Imperialism which was to be his political creed through life. The principal suggestions he made were for

closer connection between friendly societies in Great Britain and Canada and an interchange of officers. Not very striking suggestions but useful if carried out. The speech was received with real enthusiasm. Lovat never forgot that, besides being a Highland Chief and a soldier, he was a leading Scots Catholic, and at Antigonish he received the degree of LL.D. from the University of St. Francis Xavier. The place was full of Highlanders, especially of Chisholms, who received him with addresses in Gaelic and English. It was something of a surprise to Lovat to find more people talking Gaelic in Canada than in Scotland itself. The settlers from the West Coast and other Gaelic-speaking areas had multiplied and prospered but had not lost their affection for their native language in their new surroundings. Cut off from large centres and settled in communities, they had been in a better position to keep their individuality than had those left behind exposed to the attractions of Glasgow and the energies of the School Board.

Returning from Nova Scotia, Lovat broke his journey at Rivière du Loup, formerly Fraserville, to visit the descendants of Colonel Malcolm Fraser, who had fought in Fraser's Highlanders at Quebec and received a grant of land from the Crown. This family had not lost touch with the past and held family letters and military papers of historical interest. At Montreal he was the guest of Lord Strathcona and the recipient of an address from the St. Andrew's Society. Possibly the host may have been a trifle anxious at their first meeting after the Saltoun protest. It was just the kind of incident which some would have taken ill and equally just the kind which Lovat had a peculiar gift for turning into a pleasantry. Travelling in a comfort to which he was indifferent, Lovat visited Winnipeg and Toronto. At the former town he received an illuminated address and speeches of welcome from all the Scots Associations and Clubs ; and found some old Lovat Scouts whom he invited to dinner. But it was at Toronto, the last place he visited, that the welcome was most elaborate. Here the Frasers were strongly represented, and both the clan and the Gaelic Society of Canada presented him with illuminated addresses. Nor was the occasion lost to keep up the association with the home of the clan ; and the Clan Fraser Association in Inverness exchanged warm



fraternal greetings with their kinsmen at Toronto. The addresses were presented at the City Hall, where Lovat was received by the Mayor and members of the City Council after he had spoken at a luncheon given him by the Catholic Union of Canada. Enthusiasm reached its climax when he replied to the Gaelic address in the same language. As he drove off in the morning, the people from his estates were the last to see him off and to shake his hand. A flying visit to Niagara Falls, where clansmen from the vicinity were gathered to meet him, brought his first visit to Canada to an end.

It was one of Lovat's peculiarities that his visits to undeveloped countries aroused his imagination to an uncommon degree. Always on the look-out for possibilities of improvement, he could not rest until he had himself launched, or helped to launch, some scheme for developing resources which his trained eye saw to be lying latent. We shall see later that his judgment was sometimes at fault, not in over-estimating or miscalculating the future possibilities of an enterprise, but in under-estimating the period of time necessary to bring it to fruition. Canada appealed both to this side of Lovat's nature and, still more strongly, to his devotion to the Imperial ideal to which the visit was an important contribution. It is not every British visitor of distinction who leaves behind him in Canada an impression calculated to strengthen the ties between the Dominion and the Mother Country. Englishmen in particular have the melancholy reputation of exasperating Canadians by their air of superiority, and I have known cases of lamentable tactlessness on their part. It is no valid excuse to say that such lapses are unwitting and due to lack of imagination and ignorance of the mentality of a people too prone to be on the look-out for offence where none is intended. Every Englishman should take the trouble to understand his fellow-subjects the world over, whether they understand him or not ; and Englishmen with any claims to distinction are under a positive obligation to study sympathetically, and make allowances for, the susceptibilities of those they visit. If they are unable to do so, they should stay at home. Lovat had the initial advantage in Canada of being a Scotsman and not therefore suspect from the start. But this alone would not have carried him far. The remarkable reputation he left behind was due to those

qualities which first became apparent at Oxford—that combination of strength, modesty and almost feminine sensitiveness to environment which was unique.

It is a far cry from Canada to the Sudan, and the reader must excuse being taken on the journey without a break. As Lovat travelled through the torrid wastes of the Sudan on his way back to civilization from his Abyssinian journey in 1899 he noticed that the soil of the Gezira, situated between the White and Blue Niles, was peculiarly suited to the growth of cotton. The fact lay dormant in his mind for years, but came to life after the late Mr. Leigh Hunt had conceived the idea of growing cotton, not in the Gezira, but north of Khartoum. This ingenious and patriotic American was not only immensely struck with the possibility of making a fortune for himself by buying up “town-lots” in Khartoum, but also conceived the idea of ridding his country of the negro problem by employing American negroes in vast numbers in growing cotton in the Sudan. In 1902 he obtained from the Government of the Sudan a concession for growing cotton at Zeidab, near an experimental farm belonging to the late Mr. Geoffrey Nevill, Lovat’s cousin. Lovat remembered his impression of the land in the Sudan further south, and, moved by his desire to increase the supply of cotton from sources under British control, put Mr. Leigh Hunt in touch with Messrs. Wernher Beit & Co., and helped him to raise the £80,000 of capital necessary to form “The Sudan Experimental Plantation Syndicate” and start work.

Mr. Leigh Hunt’s attempt to solve the American colour problem prospered no better than other efforts of the kind ; and its failure may have been anything but a loss to the Government and people of the Sudan. Trained in American schools, the educated negroes, such as agriculturists, mechanics, dairy farmers, electricians, blacksmiths, etc., were far from happy amongst their black brethren of Africa and had to be shipped back to the United States. The enterprise, as conceived by Mr. Leigh Hunt, had failed ; and it was necessary either to drop it altogether or reorganize the Syndicate.

In the meantime the late Mr. D. P. MacGillivray, one of the breed of Scotsmen to whom the Empire owes so much, had appeared upon the scene. Born on one of Lovat’s farms

in Stratherrick, he came to Lovat's notice, and through his influence obtained a post at Cairo in the National Bank of Egypt. After quickly making his mark, he had been sent to Addis Ababa to found a branch of the bank in the Abyssinian capital. The enterprise did not prosper ; and MacGillivray, bred on the land, reverted to the occupation most suited to his talents, and, with Lovat's help, took up a post at Zeidab. In 1907 the name of the Syndicate was changed to that of "Sudan Plantations Syndicate," and, under the direction of MacGillivray, it cultivated some 10,000 acres with native labour near Zeidab. Although no dividends were paid, results steadily improved, and, by 1910, it had become clear that cotton growing in the Sudan was a paying proposition, and both Lovat and MacGillivray, who had an unbounded admiration for him, began to dream of wider horizons.

The Gezira plain, upon which Lovat had cast his eye so long ago, is a tract of dead-flat land some five million acres in extent lying between the White and the Blue Niles which join together at Khartoum. Completely arid in the dry season, its deep black soil responds marvellously to the fructifying waters of the Nile. It had been recently opened up to some extent by the extension of the railway from Khartoum to Wad Medani, a village on the Blue Nile at about the centre of the plain ; and in 1910 the Syndicate came to an agreement with the Sudan Government for the erection of a pumping station to irrigate 3000 acres at Tayiba. More capital was needed and it required long negotiations and all Lovat's energy to raise it. The foundations of the extended enterprise were laid at a meeting at the Athenæum Club attended by Sir Reginald Wingate, Sirdar and Governor-General of the Sudan, Sir Edgar Bernard, his financial adviser, Sir Julius Wernher, MacGillivray, Sir James Currie and Lovat. Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds were raised and the Sudan Plantations Syndicate was fairly launched.

It was a stroke of good fortune when Lord Kitchener went to Cairo as Agent and Consul-General. Lovat knew him well, and not only enjoyed his confidence, but was able to give him confidence in his coadjutors, especially in the late Sir Frederick Eckstein, a man of great ability and sterling character. Moreover, Lord Kitchener took the greatest

interest in the progress of the work and helped it in every way. Under such auspices the Tayiba farm prospered, and there followed a succession of further agreements with the Sudan Government, of which the most important was that of 1919 which finally decided the lines on which the Syndicate was to operate. Lovat was most active in getting this agreement through; and it is interesting to note that the principle of co-operation between all the interests involved, so consistently advocated by him in connection with land settlement in Scotland, found its logical conclusion in the model Agreement which made the native cultivator, the Sudan Government and the Syndicate all co-partners in the great enterprise.

By virtue of this later agreement with the Sudan Government the Syndicate gradually extended its operations till they embraced an area of over 700,000 acres, of which one quarter is under cotton annually. In the season 1934-35 the cotton crop alone was worth about two and a half million pounds—all grown on land on which no cotton was grown at all before 1911.

Such in brief is the story of one of the greatest experiments in tropical development of the last thirty years. It has not merely proved a gold-mine for those who had the courage and the faith to risk their money originally, but it has transformed an empty waste into a populous district whose inhabitants have shared to the full in the prosperity of the shareholders. For years great dams and irrigation works have provided work for thousands and tens of thousands, and the bales of Syndicate cotton have filled the trains and choked the quays of Port Sudan. Under the impulse of such prosperity the finances of the Sudan Government assumed an aspect un hoped for but a few years earlier; but what should have been an unmixed blessing brought with it dangers which only too soon became apparent. The rigid economy and close personal supervision which had made the Sudan Administration in the Wingate era the most efficient and successful in the Empire, gradually gave place to methods of a very different kind. Officials were multiplied and the filling of forms and the drawing up of long paper reports kept in their offices men who should have been chatting with the natives in their distant villages. The fact

that the new affluence depended on the success of a single crop was lost to sight ; and the slump and partial failure of that crop, while it revealed the underlying weakness of the position, seems to have done little to correct the errors of administration which have crept in. For all this the Syndicate is in no way to blame ; but without its huge success, lack of funds would have made the new system impossible.

Lovat was on the Board of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate from its inception until he died, except during his term of office as Under-Secretary for the Dominions. He frequently visited Khartoum to carry through negotiations which involved a number of considerations touching the welfare of the inhabitants as well as the interests of the Syndicate. Enjoying the entire confidence both of the Sudan Government and of the London Board, he was the very man for the business and carried it through with a minimum of friction and maximum of accomplishment. His knowledge of tropical agriculture was considerable and, so long as he lived, that knowledge was of the greatest value to the Board, and the gap in that particular direction caused by his death has never been filled. One who has known, helped and watched over the Sudan in all its vicissitudes since the British took it over as a derelict and depopulated area from the Khalifa, writes : " Lovat is certainly entitled to a definite place amongst the not undistinguished pioneer company who, amid circumstances which often taxed both faith and courage, laid in the Sudan economic and social foundations."

## CHAPTER VII

THE CROFTER QUESTION. THE SCOTTISH HOUSING COMMISSION.  
AFFORESTATION; AND FORESTRY SURVEY OF THE GREAT  
GLEN. MARRIAGE.

1909—1914

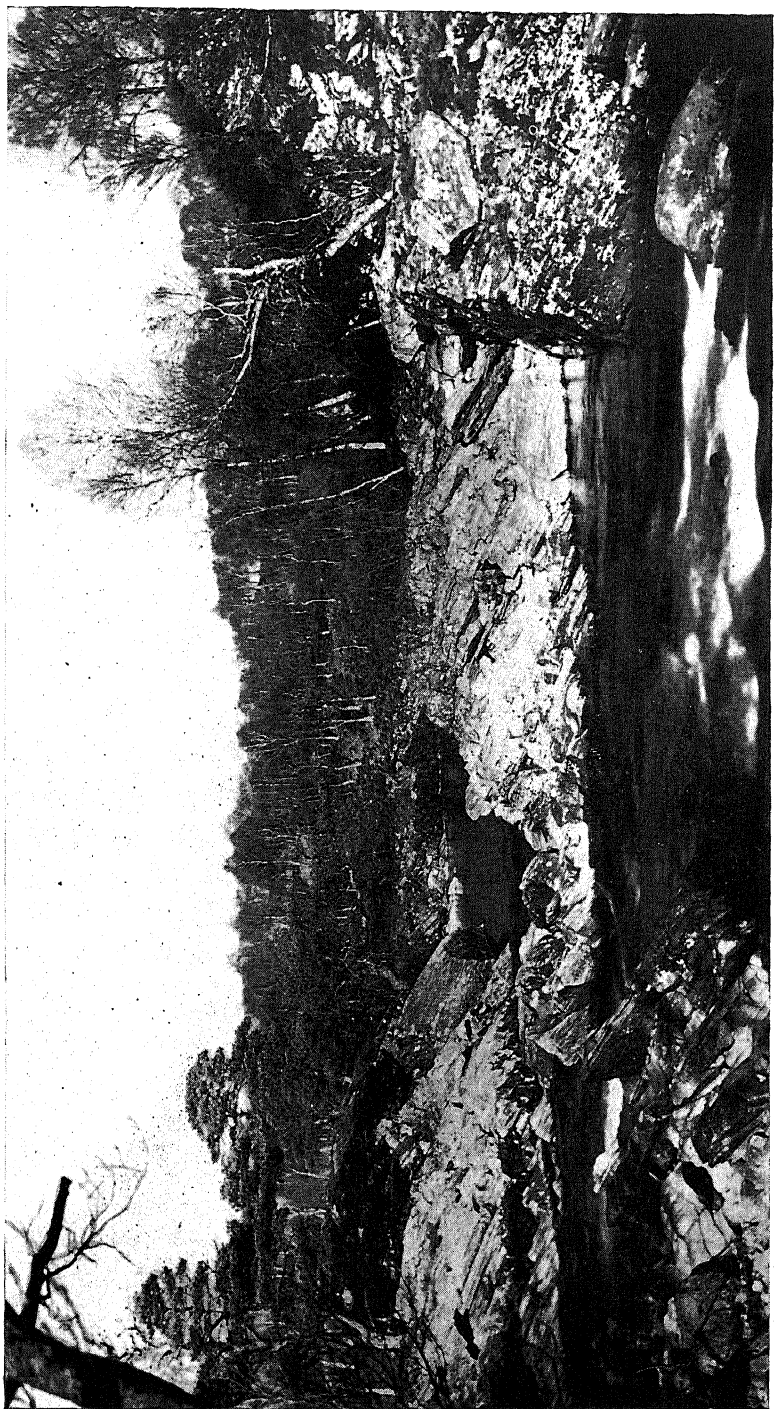
WE have seen how the crofter legislation of the 'eighties affected Lovat's father; and no account of Lovat's life would be complete without mentioning the interest he took in this subject. It was a burning one in the Highlands; and the heartless action of some proprietors in evicting their crofters had not merely caused much bad blood, but, in accordance with the well-tryed maxim that "hard cases make bad law," had resulted in well-meant legislation which defeated its own object. This is not the place to give the history of the crofting question. It would fill a book in itself and a depressing book at that. Lovat's constant aim in dealing with it was to improve the position of the crofter by enabling him to extend his holding, improve his home and supplement the income from his land by some subsidiary industry in the off season—but not at the expense of the proprietor. And to this proviso he attached the first importance not merely because he was himself a large proprietor, though no doubt this weighed with him, but because it was his conviction that, without the co-operation of the proprietor, nothing useful could, in practice as apart from theory, be effected.

And here a digression may be in place. Lovat's consistent advocacy of co-operation in all the schemes he put forward was the outcome of one of the strongest instincts in his whole nature—the instinct for peace. We all know that men, as a rule, shrink from a "scene" even to the length of incurring the charge of cowardice from members of the robuster sex.

Doubtless Lovat was not free from this weakness ; though no one ever accused him of lack of either moral or physical courage in the larger sense. He was profoundly convinced that no good ever came of quarrelling ; and there was no trouble he would not take to conciliate those who differed from him. In small family matters and in larger ones he was a born peacemaker ; and the quarrels and disputes he composed by his personal influence were endless. Scotsmen will remember the ferment all over the Highlands during the bitter quarrel between the Free and the so-called " Wee Free " Churches. In the parish of Kiltarlity feelings ran as high as elsewhere until the parishioners had the idea of asking Lovat to decide the matters at issue. He, a Catholic, did so to the complete satisfaction of both sides. Of all his great qualities, none was more valuable to the country during a period of unrest than his genius for peace-making and his rooted conviction that satisfactory results could only be obtained by all pulling together. But we must return to our crofters.

Anyone reading Lovat's many speeches in the House of Lords on land settlement, housing and afforestation cannot but be struck by the undeviating consistency with which he maintained the close correlation between the three subjects and the necessity for co-operation between all interested parties if success was to be obtained. Nor did the criterion of success vary more than did the means to win it. It was the simple one of whether or not any particular scheme would put on the land and maintain there in decent comfort a larger number of families than were on the land already. It was surprising how many attractive plans dissolved under this acid test. Plans for dividing arable farms which would have resulted in more agricultural workmen losing their jobs than new men being put on the land ; plans for ploughing up the winter keep of sheep farmers who would thereby be forced out of business, and plans which, providing no subsidiary employment, would result in the settlers leaving the land after the first winter.

But Lovat was not satisfied with criticism ; and in 1909 moved the second reading of a Bill of his own, " The Crofting Parishes (Scotland) Bill," which, he emphasized, was but an extension of the original Crofters' Act. Its object was to make



*The Deer Forest of Braulen*





possible an increase in the size of the holdings and the formation of new ones and to favour the inauguration of new enterprises. In his opinion afforestation offered the only large-scale solution to the difficulty of enabling the small-holder to supplement his living from the land. The Bill never had a chance of going through, as the Radical Government in power had already one of their own on the stocks.

In 1911 the Government brought in the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill for dealing with small holdings and crofts in Scotland, and Lovat made an important contribution to the debate in the House of Lords on the second reading that November. Although criticizing a good many clauses of the Bill, he welcomed it as likely to remedy certain crofter grievances in the north of Scotland and to extend to other parts of the country the security of the crofter tenure of land. At the same time he found that it would not either fill up the soil or stop the depopulation which was taking place, especially in the crofter counties. None the less, security of tenure was the only hope of doing either. It has long been a belief in Radical circles that vast areas under deer and sheep can be turned into arable farm by a stroke of the pen, although the enormous sums spent on reclamation by the Duke of Sutherland earlier in the century had conclusively proved the opposite. Lovat naturally alluded to this aspect of the question and pointed out that, although the Crofters' Act of 1886 gave the crofter the right to claim more land if he wished it, there was actually less land under cultivation than when the Act was passed. Lovat believed that it would be very much better if deer forests could be used for other purposes than sport and he thought they could ; but no more than an insignificant number of families would be willing to take up arable land on them. The new settlers would, therefore, have to be placed either on those parts of the sheep farms which were capable of being cultivated or on farms already cultivated by others. To do the former would, by depriving the sheep farmers of their winter grazing, make it impossible for them to maintain their sheep throughout the year and the result would be many more thousand acres put under deer. To do the latter would be no gain. The proper solution of the problem of deer forests was the extension of afforestation which was neglected in the Bill.

Afforestation would turn much non-arable land to definite advantage and would afford the outside occupation necessary to enable a family to live on the small area of arable land available. Lovat opposed a separate Board of Agriculture for Scotland both on the score of expense and because it was important to utilize the personnel and experience of the London Board. The latter had dealt successfully with many attacks of foot-and-mouth disease, the danger of which would be enormously increased in Scotland by a separate Board. A local department of the Board sitting in Scotland was the right solution and was the one advocated unanimously by the one hundred and fifty farmers, Radical and Conservative, who had recently discussed the question.

The Bill was passed in 1911 with certain amendments, and the complaints to which it had given rise caused Lord Camperdown to move in July, 1914, for the appointment of a Joint Committee of the two Houses to enquire into its administration. Lovat first of all made a complaint, often made by other men, that the Government had no representative in the House of Lords who really understood the subject. He attributed the failure of the scheme mainly to the expense ; and calculated that, on an average, a small holding had cost the Board about £1000. The Board had only £200,000 a year to spend ; and the Government, by refusing an amendment providing for "settlement by consent," was responsible for much extra expense. For it was notorious that it was far more expensive to go before an Arbitrator or a Court than to settle by consent. As we have already noted, this line of thought governed all Lovat's dealings in questions of land, and we shall see later how much it contributed to the success of the Forestry Commission. But the principal cause of expense, severely criticized in the Report of the Land Court, was the ignorance of the members of the Land Court, most of whom had been appointed for political reasons. The old Crofters' Commission had the confidence of both sides ; but the new Land Court was not a fair Court and many proprietors who ought to welcome, and would have welcomed, the extension of smallholdings had opposed them for this reason and thus added to their cost. Then the Board had completely neglected the possibilities of forestry ; it had done nothing to relieve the

position in the Lewes which was crying for action ; in fact the condition of the Outer Islands was a shame to the civilization of the whole of Scotland. Finally, the state of the Board's own property at Nigg was infinitely more scandalous than that of any proprietor. He had seen it himself and people were living there in worse conditions than in any Kaffir kraal.

The interest in housing Lovat had shown in these and other speeches in the House of Lords made it natural that he should be appointed a member of the Royal Commission on Housing (Scotland) which was set up by the Government towards the end of 1912. In many parts of Scotland the prevalence of insanitary and inadequate housing constituted, as Lovat had so often pointed out, one of the gravest social problems of the day. The Commission held its first sitting for the taking of evidence in March, 1913. Until the outbreak of the War, Lovat took a large part in the work of the Commission, both when it met in Edinburgh and during its inspections of the congested districts of the towns as well of the mining and agricultural areas throughout Scotland. Thoroughly versed in the problems connected with the housing of agricultural workers and thecrofting communities in the north and west, he spoke on these aspects of the problem with a knowledge and authority unequalled by any of his colleagues. In June, 1913, he took part in a visit to Skye and the Outer Islands, and three months later he entertained the Commission for three days at Beaufort, whilst evidence from the northern counties was heard in Inverness and visits of inspection which he had personally planned were paid to the Black Isle and the adjacent parts of Invernesshire. From the very beginning the Commission were impressed by his energy of mind and body, his power of going straight to the heart of a problem, and the delightful spirit of camaraderie which he brought to the business; and all these qualities came still more prominently forward when in his own home and amongst the Highlanders whom he knew personally and intimately.

The War interrupted the work as far as Lovat was concerned, and it was practically suspended during 1916. But in January, 1917, it was resumed on instructions from the Government and the Report came out in September of that

year. During the crowded months preceding its publication Lovat kept in close touch with his colleagues by correspondence from France and consultations during his hurried intervals of leave. A cleavage of opinion had appeared early in the proceedings, not as regards the magnitude of the problem, but as to the methods and forms of enterprise by which it could be solved and the houses supplied. As discussions proceeded, Lovat took the lead in outlining a policy which took shape in a Minority Report signed by four out of the twelve members of the Commission. The Chairman, Sir Henry Ballantyne, was in the majority ; whilst Mr. George Barbour, Mr. Charles Carlow and Mrs. George Kerr formed the minority.

It is interesting to see how the same two guiding principles lie at the base of all Lovat's efforts for dealing with all the problems of the land ; and, as in his afforestation proposals, so in this case, we find that co-operation between the State and the individual and economy of expenditure are the foundations upon which he wished to build. The Minority Report makes interesting reading now when housing is again in the forefront of the political battle ; and it can safely be said that, had its recommendation been kept more in mind since it was written, vast sums would have been saved and more houses would have been built. We find here, as later, the same differences between those who can conceive of no other agency than a Public Authority as capable of providing houses and those who wish to bring in all possible sources of supply without regard to doctrinaire theories. Lovat could not fail to be amongst the latter ; and the Minority Report stated at the outset that the signatories considered " the need for the rapid supply of enlarged and improved houses to be so great that no one form of enterprise is adequate to meet it : and in our judgment the general result of the Majority Report is to throw too large a share of the responsibility for the rehousing of Scotland on to the Local Authorities." Keeping this broad principle in view, Lovat criticized the excessive centralization and the financial proposals of the Majority ; and he laid stress on the necessity of assisting private builders of working-class houses during the period following the War.

No one member of the Commission knew half as much as Lovat about crofting areas nor understood as well as he the

mentality of the crofters—a mentality which has been the despair of many well-meaning authors of costly schemes to help them. Strong in his knowledge, he deprecated raising expectations by constant enquiries and Commissions. The only result was that the crofters, as the late Sanitary Inspector for Inverness had said, “are now lying on their backs waiting for you to feed them.” A completely new policy was needed, and it should include a separate Board for the crofting areas, a separate grant in aid and a clearly defined period of effort during which the grant should be available and a thorough improvement of housing carried out.

To show how much Lovat had the improvement of the conditions of the crofters at heart, it should be mentioned here that he re-built almost every crofter's house on his estate and spent £31,000 in doing so. On the larger farmhouses he spent £39,000. Richer landowners may have spent more ; but it is doubtful whether any expended such a large proportion of his income on improvements as did Lovat. That his people appreciated his care for them is illustrated by two typical incidents. During the training manoeuvres of the Scouts considerable damage was done to a fine field of oats. Asked to make up a claim for damage, the tenant replied that, if Lord Lovat was to pay, he would not take a penny. If the charges were to be met by the War Office, he would have the damage valued. The other incident concerned a small tenant who had made considerable improvements to his holding. Lovat was visiting him and, knowing he had no lease, asked if he would not like one. The tenant answered that he and his family had been on the estate before Culloden and had never had a lease. As long as he did what was right, he knew Lord Lovat would never disturb him or his family and that was better than any lease.

Interest in forestry was an hereditary attribute of the Strichen branch of the Frasers and Lovat had the advantage of being grounded in its principles by Mr. John Dewar, head forester at Beaufort and one of the best of his day. The very large areas planted by his father and grandfather, chiefly with Scots pine and larch, had been neglected for some time and, amongst his many activities between the South African War and 1914, the care of the Beaufort woods and the advancement of forestry in general was one of the most important.

The squirrel plague had ruined many of the thirty and forty-year-old pine woods ; and Lovat, with the assistance of Mr. Munro Ferguson (later Lord Novar), formed a squirrel club to deal with it. As so often happens with scourges of nature, the squirrels died of an epidemic more efficacious than any club ; and Lovat proceeded to sell and replant the damaged areas. Thus he first came into touch with timber merchants, nurserymen and lecturers of the universities and colleges from whom he learned much. He soon realized that we were far behind other countries in most departments of forestry and that the landowners and their agents were hopelessly in the hands of the merchants, to whom even the measuring of the timber was often left. Incidentally Lovat was one of the first to realize the value of Sitka spruce as a tree for Scotland.

In the meantime, the Government had not been idle and the Report of the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion and Afforestation was published. This Report, unsatisfactory and inaccurate as it was regarding afforestation, had the merit of arousing interest in the subject and produced, or helped to produce, an article by Lovat in the Transactions of the Royal Arboricultural Society in July, 1909. In this article he showed his unrivalled knowledge of the economics of the Highlands, where afforestation had its most promising field ; and he pointed out the numerous fallacies into which ignorance of the subject had led the Commission. He dwelt on the importance of the question of rates which the Commission had not touched, and, always preoccupied with the long view of his subject, he fell foul of the naïve confessions of the Commission that their chief concern was not with permanent employment, but with the temporary occupation that is connected with the establishment of forests. How often since has devotion to immediate results ruined the prospects of eventual recovery ! The fact was that the scheme of the Commission was grotesquely grandiose, as Lovat had no difficulty in showing, and would have resulted in vast public expenditure with little or nothing to show for it.

But Lovat was never content with negative criticism, and, more anxious than anyone to forward afforestation in the Highlands, he adumbrated a scheme of his own. Freely admitting that the State must play an indispensable part, he laid down the limits within which it could usefully act. The

State should establish a Central Forestry Board ; acquire experimental and demonstration areas consisting of centrally situated well-wooded estates with plantations of various ages ; establish a school or schools for foresters near the demonstration areas ; make a survey of the mountain and heath lands of Great Britain and Ireland ; form schemes and appoint inspectors in the different districts ; acquire and plant such blocks of poor mountain and heath lands as could be planted with profit to the State as long as the unplanted areas left on the hands of the State did not represent an important proportion of the whole property acquired. Outside these limits the scheme was based on co-operation between the State and the landowner. It is unnecessary to give all its details, though they are of practical value. It is enough to say that the State was to provide money at a low rate of interest for afforestation and the landlord to provide the land. The loan and the capital value of the land before planting were to form a joint capital account and the profits divided *pro rata* at the first felling. The interests of the State were safeguarded in various ways against a predatory landlord. The scheme had the advantages of attaining results at much less cost to the State than under pure State Forestry, of encouraging landlords to go in for forestry and of obtaining the benefit of local knowledge so important in dealing with the departure from habitual routine bound to accompany forestry development. The objections were directed principally against the " dual control " which would be set up ; but it is probable that a Radical Government was fundamentally opposed to any scheme which might be construed as of assistance to landlords. In any case, the Forestry Commission, when finally set up, was a purely State institution ; and it is a good example of Lovat's complete lack of any pettiness of spirit that its success was principally due to himself.

About the time Lovat was penning his article, the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society (now the Royal Scottish Forestry Society) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and it was decided to mark the event by publishing a sample survey, such as his article recommended should be done on a large scale by the State, of some part of Scotland showing the area suitable for silviculture and its probable effect on other rural activities and on employment if it were brought under wood.



The idea was not a new one with the Society, and it happened that Captain Archibald Stirling of Keir, who later married Lovat's fourth sister, was President of the Society when it came to carrying it out. The task was entrusted to him in conjunction with Lovat and Colonel Bailey, a retired Indian forester who edited the Society's transactions. It would have been a simple matter to have chosen an area free from those economic difficulties inseparable from afforestation in the Highlands on any large scale. Such areas existed and a survey of one of them would have entailed comparatively little work. But the object of the Society was to grapple with the difficulties, and the area of Glen Mhor, or the Great Glen, was deliberately chosen as affording examples of all of them. Lovat knew it well, for he owned extensive estates within its boundaries ; and Fort Augustus, where he had been at school, was in the heart of it.

Few tourists to Scotland do not know the Great Glen through which the Caledonian Canal runs from sea to sea ; and if any read this book, I hope they will look with a new interest upon its beauties. To these Lovat was indifferent and chose the area for practical reasons only. It contained 60,000 acres of immediately plantable land without including any situated more than eight miles from the main Glen ; it presented both East and West Coast conditions of population, soil and climate ; it was particularly suitable for the erection of small holdings owing to the low elevation of the main Glen and to the considerable extent of the arable land on some of the sheep farms ; it contained tracts of natural woodland and of planted woods, so that estimates of future crops could be checked by actual results ; it comprised sheep farms, arable farms, crofts, common grazings, deer forests and grouse moors so that opportunities were afforded of dealing with all the economic difficulties which could arise ; the Caledonian Canal made it possible to bring to a central depot the forest products of the whole area, thus showing the advantages to be gained by large-scale operations with concentration of manufactures and subsidiary industries ; and finally, the proprietors were friendly to forestry and planted on a considerable scale themselves.

The same energy and enthusiasm which characterized the work of the Grouse Commission met with the same generous

response from all those able to help in the survey. Great proprietors of woods, like Lady Seafield and Mr. Munro Ferguson of Novar, lent the services of their foresters, owners of deer forests and head stalkers gave advice in connection with the problems of deer and experts were called in regarding the important question of rates. All these people gave their time for nothing and the Society only supplied the funds necessary for printing the Report and for certain out-of-pocket expenses. The Report was published in the Transactions of the Society in July, 1911, and is a model of what a forestry survey of the Highlands should be. In its ninety closely printed pages and numerous maps, every aspect of the afforestation problem of the district is thoroughly examined and explained. The Report was written almost entirely by Lovat, Captain Stirling of Keir and Colonel Bailey ; and a visitor to Keir during its compilation has given an amusing account of the enthusiasm with which the business was attacked and the discussions which accompanied it. Lovat was fond of a resounding phrase and had, as has already been mentioned, an extraordinary knack of picking up the passing expressions of the day. Consequently "avenues" were apt to be "explored" and "vistas opened" and other scenic effects described with some frequency in his pages. Such expressions were anathema to Captain Stirling, who, besides being a master of forestry and botany, possessed rare artistic knowledge and admirable literary taste ; and he ruled them out relentlessly. The sort of scene that used to take place was this : Lovat : "Hullo, Archie, I see you have scratched out that sentence of mine." Captain Stirling : "Quite impossible to keep it in." Lovat : "Well, I thought it was rather good, I must say. It fits in well and makes an appeal to people." Captain Stirling : "My dear Simon, you can't really like that kind of *Daily Mail* stuff. Of course it must come out." Lovat : "Oh, well ! if you really object to it so much you can take it out ; but I did think it rather good." Thus did three unpaid amateurs carry through a difficult piece of work which had much influence and was turned to practical use when the Forestry Commission was set up. The well-paid Development Commission to the Board of Agriculture had refused to touch it.

In 1910 Mr. Sutherland (now Sir John Sutherland) had

the happy idea of combining Scots landowners in a co-operative society for the purchase and exchange of plants, tools and fencing materials and for the measurement, valuation and sale of timber. Lovat threw himself into the scheme, which was planned at a meeting of a few lairds at Sir John Stirling-Maxwell's house at Pollok, and the Society was launched some weeks later at the Highland Show at Dumfries. In its early days Lovat was the leading spirit in the Society, which turned out a great success and proved most useful during the War, measuring and selling quantities of standing timber for its members and helping to find the planks so needed for the Army in France and for supplies of all kinds. In 1911 a Departmental Committee was appointed to advise and report on Scottish Forestry, and Lovat naturally welcomed the work involved. Deeply interested in the subject and in everything connected with the development and improvement of land in Scotland, he had the advantage of being able to quote concrete facts brought to light by his survey of the Great Glen. Between 1911 and the outbreak of war he constantly met the members and discussed the pressing problems in connection with the land which were then rife. Sir John Sutherland testifies that in all questions relating to the settlement of people on the land Lovat took a very wide and sensible view and, while always ready to meet the demands of the State, he was wise enough to see that neither his, nor other landowners', interests were prejudiced. No landowner did more for the promotion of the welfare of agriculture. The War interrupted Lovat's work on this committee, but he resumed it after being invalided home from Gallipoli. Even when directing timber supplies in France, he put in a deal of work on it and the relief was not a light one when he finished with the final Report in May, 1917.

It was whilst apparently absorbed in his Grouse Commission, his Forestry work and his amusements that Lovat married. Nothing has been said in this book about his attitude towards women. That attitude is easily defined. It was of his time and of his class. Brought up by an unusually intelligent and broad-minded mother, and amongst a number of lively and capable sisters, he unconsciously acquired a knowledge of, and respect for, the sex denied to less happily situated boys. A great favourite with women, he enjoyed

their company and their friendship. But he did not take seriously their views on politics, which he considered outside their proper sphere. During the height of the Suffragette Campaign his mother, who held strong opinions on the movement, suggested taking the lead against it in the North. Lovat objected, and the idea, never very seriously entertained, was dropped. In this, as in some other matters, he had something of the continental, and especially of the French, outlook. And it should be borne in mind that in no country have women wielded the influence they have in France, where their political aspirations have, up to now, been weaker than in the so-called Teutonic countries. As regards marriage, Lovat's life was so occupied with active masculine pursuits that he gave as little thought to it as he did to affairs of the heart outside it. Knowing himself well enough to realize that marriage would be for him either a disastrous failure or the perfection of his life, he just waited until fate should throw in his way someone to whom he felt irresistibly drawn. Comfortable at home with a mother and unmarried sister to keep house for him, he was in no hurry.

It was not till he was nearing forty that he encountered his fate. In May, 1910, he met Laura Lister, aged eighteen, the second daughter of the late Lord Ribblesdale; (his portrait by Sargent in the Tate Gallery is the finest ever painted by the great artist.) Her mother was one of the talented daughters of Sir Charles Tennant; and the beauty and intellectual distinction of the parents were rarely combined in the child. Utterly careless of "giving himself away," Lovat threw himself into the most important enterprise of his life with the ardour of a boy and the mature determination of his years. A month after they met they were engaged, and in November married in London after the bride had been received into the Catholic Church. With passion, tenderness, respect and, last but not least, an unshakeable belief in the indissoluble character of marriage, what wonder that his turned out an ideal one!

## CHAPTER VIII

LOVAT SCOUTS AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR. COMMAND OF THE  
HIGHLAND MOUNTED BRIGADE IN PEACE AND IN GALLIPOLI.

1903-1915

IN the last chapters we have described Lovat's peaceful pursuits, some of which were continued during the whole War. It is now necessary to turn back and pick up the threads of his life of soldiering which we left with the disbandment of the Lovat Scouts after their return from South Africa. Their exploits had appealed to the Highland imagination, and Lovat had no mind to allow the disbandment of the force to mark the end of their existence. He had relinquished his commission in the Yeomanry and been granted the rank of Honorary Major in the Army at the end of 1902, when he reverted to his old position of Major of the First Volunteer Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders. He first tried to persuade the War Office to keep a permanent nucleus of stalkers on regular pay. They would have formed an invaluable *cadre* round which to build a force, but the novelty of the suggestion was too much for the authorities. The latter agreed, however, to authorize him to raise two regiments of yeomanry, each five hundred strong, to be called First and Second Lovat Scouts. Recruiting his men from Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Invernesshire, the Outer Hebrides and Nairnshire, he raised the two regiments in 1903, when he was transferred back to the yeomanry and promoted lieutenant-colonel to command the force. Although called yeomanry, and on the same establishment as all other yeomanry, the new force was really more like the mounted infantry used so extensively in South Africa. There were, too, peculiarities in the organization ; the two

regiments being at first treated as one of eight squadrons, with Lovat as the only commanding officer and two seconds-in-command, Majors A. W. Macdonald and Augustus C. Baillie, and only one quartermaster, Captain H. Pocock.

Recruiting arrangements for the first camp were well advanced by the time the two adjutants, Captain the Hon. Hugh Fraser (Scots Guards) and Brevet-Major the Hon. Ralph Campbell (Cameron Highlanders) were appointed. It was something of a novelty for infantry officers to be selected for yeomanry, and it took Lovat all his time to get the War Office to agree to the new departure. Splendid material was available from those just returned from South Africa, and the backbone of the whole regiment was the squadron leaders who proceeded to raise men in their own districts. Major Macdonald, who was a squadron leader as well as a second-in-command, dealt with Lochaber, Major Sir A. Campbell Orde with Uist, Major Kenneth Macdonald of Skeabost with Skye, Major E. G. Fraser Tytler of Aldourie with the Aird, Major A. Stirling with Wester Ross, Major Barclay with Sutherland, Captain Munro-Ferguson with Ross-shire and Major Brodie of Brodie with Invernesshire. They were a splendid lot of officers, who had all won Lovat's confidence and affection in South Africa.

In the short time available before the first camp it was wonderful what was achieved. As a general rule only men who could bring their own pony were chosen, and care had to be taken not to interfere with the existing Volunteer units. This involved going into outlying districts and even taking individual stalkers, ghillies, and such-like, who lived miles from their nearest neighbours—a circumstance which naturally increased the difficulties of recruiting, clothing, training and assembling for camp. An extra capitation grant secured by Lovat to meet these special conditions helped matters greatly; and the conditions of service so appealed to the men, especially those from the west coast, that many more than required could easily have been raised. Besides payment for drills and for the time in camp, £5 was given for each pony passed as suitable, and a mileage marching allowance from the men's homes to camp. The Uist and Skye squadrons crossed the Kyle of Lochalsh and came on by

road, men of the Sutherland squadron from the extreme north-west by Scourie and those from Lochaber and Kin-gussie all did the journey by road.

Beaufort again became the scene of training, the first camp being pitched below the castle. It was a memorable occasion when the squadrons came riding in from all sides until a thousand mounted men were assembled the first night. Recruiting had outstripped the tailors, and many men arrived in bowler hats and blue suits. One squadron was found greatly to extend beyond the lines prepared for it. The squadron leader had not liked to refuse men anxious to join, so had brought a few extra ! The cooks had been forgotten, and there had been no time to train any. It took hours to get the first meals served. There were a number of first-class men accustomed to the use of the glass of whom a special squadron of Scouts was formed and trained together under the veteran leadership of Major Ewen Grant of Glenmoriston. They worked in groups of four, each group with its leader, glass-men, expert shots and good riders. A machine gun section was started, and became very efficient under Major Stewart of Ensay.

Interest was stimulated throughout the year by conferences of officers and, as time went on, specialist classes of all kinds were held. One of the most successful was a school of instruction held jointly for the officers of the Scouts and the Scottish Horse at Beaufort. Colonel the Hon. John Lindley, then commanding the Cavalry School at Netheravon, had inherited as a lecturer the talent of his famous grandfather the botanist, and his course of instruction was amongst the most appreciated. Certificates were granted to officers, who were thus saved the expense of a journey south in order to qualify. New camping grounds were found year by year, and new rifle ranges had to be built in districts too far removed from the ranges used by the Volunteers. As a side-line efforts were made to improve the Highland pony for military purposes. Four stallions were acquired and sent round to serve approved mares belonging to members of the Scouts ; and experimental breeders may be interested to know that each stallion represented a separate strain—thoroughbred, Basuto, Welsh pony and Highland Garron. Further encouragement to men to own their own ponies was

given by buying a number, which were resold to the men on the instalment system.

The leadership and training of the corps came into their own during the manoeuvres of 1907. Organized on a greater scale than usual, the Scouts, Fife and Forfar Yeomanry and the Scots Greys were pitted against the 18th Hussars and the Scottish Horse which had been originally raised by the Marquess of Tullibardine during the South African War. Rivalry between this latter corps and the Scouts was hereditary as regards the leaders and acute amongst the rank and file ; and blows were narrowly averted after Lovat, by a prodigious night march across the wildest country in Perthshire, had surprised and captured the enemy camp at dawn. Leaving their horses on the road south of the famous pass of Killiecrankie, the Scouts, led by Lovat, had marched to Loch Ordie, where the decisive engagement ending the first phase of the manoeuvres was fought. In the "pow-wow" which followed under the presidency of General Michael Rimington, and in the presence of a number of foreign military attachés, Lovat's marshalling of the facts and appreciation of the situation made a deep impression on all present. Sir John Gilmour, now Home Secretary, and then serving with the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, remembers the conference well, and describes Lovat's report as both masterly and fair. The manoeuvres were a triumph for the Scouts, who returned home in the highest spirits.

On April 1st of the following year, 1908, Lovat was appointed to command the Highland Mounted Brigade (Territorial Force), with the temporary rank of colonel in the Army whilst so employed ; and a few months later he was made A.D.C. to the King and colonel in the Territorial Army. His new command comprised two regiments of Lovat Scouts, the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry and the Inverness Royal Horse Artillery ; and again he succeeded in securing the services of first-class regular officers for the Staff, with Major Frederick Allhusen as brigade major. With so many other irons in the fire, Lovat paid little attention to the routine work of the brigade. He concentrated on its actual training, in which he excelled. Starting with a personal knowledge of every man and officer in his own regiment, he soon mastered the mentality and tastes of the Lowlanders,



and took them into consideration when forming any scheme for that common action which was his constant object. His practical mind always arrived at framing tactical schemes which would encourage initiative and prompt action on the part of his officers, especially the juniors. It was particularly in the conduct of Staff rides and theoretical instruction that his great power of imparting military knowledge was shown ; and his appreciation of a situation and criticism of the ideas and work of others was such that none could fail to learn from them. Of untiring energy himself, he expected much from others ; but in this, as in all the rest he undertook, he fired all with his own enthusiasm, and few ever found a task he set them other than a pleasure.

His appointment ended in 1912, and the War found him without a command. But so effectively had he planned the organization in previous years that mobilization was effected without a hitch. From all the scattered counties in the North men and stores poured in by road, by rail and by sea to the appointed place at the appointed time. It was during the movement of the brigade from Blairgowrie to Huntingdon that the rumour was first heard that a force of Russians had landed in the north of Scotland and travelled south ; and there is little doubt that it arose in connection with this movement. The rumour, fantastic in itself, must have had some foundation ; and the facts first adduced by the credulous to support it fitted in remarkably with the movements of the brigade. For thirteen trains had passed through Newcastle and York from Scotland, travelling in succession all one night ; and many of the men in those trains spoke a foreign language, wore queer headgear and were shy and retiring. When asked whence they came by benevolent ladies who had organized a canteen on York platform, they could only mutter Ross-shire (Russia). Those who witnessed the hysteria of many of the non-combatants during the War years will not be surprised that people were soon heard to swear that the men had snow on their boots, whilst others had learned from high officials the exact numbers of the Russians. Those who disbelieved such bunkum were suspected as pro-Germans.

Lovat was in London during the critical days before the outbreak of war, and he often used to describe this fortnight



*Lovat, in command of the Highland Mounted Brigade*



as the most interesting in his life, and said he had written an account of it for the benefit of his family. No man of mark ever put less on paper, and the most careful search has failed to reveal any record of this time. All we know is that he had repeated conversations with the Prime Minister, Lord Haldane, Monsieur Cambon, the French Ambassador, Sir Edward Grey and the leading Conservatives. Pressed by M. Cambon, who asked him whether the word "honour" was still to be found in the English dictionary, he did his utmost to persuade Mr. Asquith and Sir E. Grey to make to Germany a declaration of solidarity with France. Whether such a declaration would have averted war is still a matter of acute controversy. It is certain that it was the only chance of doing so, and from what I have heard from competent neutral diplomatists who were in Germany at the outbreak of war, I have no doubt whatever myself that if made in time, it would have averted war. Sir E. Grey's defence of his silence, as given in his own book, *Twenty-five Years*, is complete and convincing in so far as he personally is concerned. But a grievous responsibility rests on the Liberal majority in the House of Commons, whose blindness to what they did not wish to see was criminal. The incident, recorded on page 338 of Volume I of *Twenty-five Years*, of the prominent supporter of the Government who could only repeat like a parrot that Germany would not invade Belgium, is as characteristic as it is damning. The other point on which Lovat concentrated during his stay in London was the despatch of the Expeditionary Force, should war break out. He was haunted by the fear that there would be such an outcry against denuding the country of its defences that the Government would not dare to send the force overseas. To avert this he left no stone unturned; seeking out and interviewing all the prominent men whom he knew.

Of one interview alone have I been able to secure a first-hand account. He had been in the habit of consulting with Mr. Amery on Army organization, and he called on him on August 4th, 1914, the day following the ultimatum. They found that they had both been at work on schemes for using the Territorial Force as the framework for the subsequent vast enlargement of the Army which they foresaw would be required. Combining their schemes into one, they

went to the War Office and secured approval of it from the Adjutant-General and from Lord Haldane ; and a few days later it was accepted by Sir Charles Harris from the financial point of view. The essence of the scheme was to use the Territorial Associations, combined for that purpose in Command Associations, as the framework into which all new recruits and all available material in the shape of ex-reservists and old officers should be brought together for the creation of successive series of Territorial armies to be available to go to the Front as soon as trained.

With the approval of the Adjutant-General, Lovat and Amery went to see Lord Kitchener on his first day at the War Office. Lovat acted as spokesman and briefly expounded the scheme. Kitchener replied : " My dear Lovat, this is no doubt an excellent scheme, and I may want to do something about the Territorials later. But for the moment what I must have is more *soldiers*, and I want to raise them as quickly as possible, at least one hundred thousand. Will you, with your great influence in Scotland, go down there and help to stimulate recruiting? And will you, Amery, go down to Birmingham, and with tongue and pen help me to get recruits there? Thank you very much." Stupefied by Kitchener's incapacity to realize that the Territorials at that moment were infinitely better soldiers than his new armies could be for some months, and overborne by his very definite attitude, Lovat and Amery made no attempt to argue him out of his decision. They left that evening for Inverness and Birmingham respectively.

This decision of Kitchener's to make no use of the organisation so carefully and skilfully planned by Haldane and so laboriously built up by such men as Lovat, just when it should have proved invaluable, had a disastrous effect on the early years, if indeed not on the whole course of the War ; and it has often been severely and justly criticised. It is only to be explained by Kitchener's ignorance of the modern British military machine. It is probable from the way in which, in this conversation and in others, he spoke of " Territorials " as opposed to " Soldiers," that he was confusing the elderly French Territorials, of which he knew something, with Haldane's creation. That the two forces, with no other attribute in common, should have had the same

name, turned out to be one of the major misfortunes of the War, but one hardly to be foreseen either by Haldane or by Lovat.

After a month of feverish activity in London and Invernesshire Lovat visited the Scouts at Huntingdon. How he found them and was given his old command of the Highland Mounted Brigade next day is described in a letter to his wife :

“ *August 22nd, 1914.*

I went yesterday to see the Scouts and found them so disorganised and worried over orders and counter-orders that I had to say that I would stick to them, and that if they went to the Front so would I. To-day Kitchener sent for me and gave me the command of the Highland Mounted Brigade. He has moved Tyndale Biscoe on to the cavalry staff. I am so relieved that it is arranged. I had raised and trained the men, and I feel that under me they will be wisely led, and well looked after. Now, you knew I would *have* to go, and it is much better that I should go in command of what, in four or five months, will be a good command, than in a half-trained rabble run by a moderate soldier. We are to be under Bruce Hamilton, and are to be part of the Highland army (Infantry and Mounted Infantry). This is much better from your point of view, as we will take longer to train than the yeomanry, who will be ready in two months. By two or three months' time one prays that the edge will be off the War. By then, pray God, it will be a war in German territory, with the first-line troops exhausted, and my men will be far better trained than in the South African War, and fighting, let us hope, only second-line German troops. It is not at all improbable also that they will use the Territorials to begin with for line-of-communication troops.

I should get away from here on Sunday and be with you for two or three days. I shall take about eight per cent of the Scouts and the Fife and Forfar and recruit twenty per cent in the north and west. You can tell Vickers<sup>1</sup> and Macdonald<sup>2</sup> I shall take them.

<sup>1</sup> Vickers had been with him as butler for twelve years and died in his service, a much-loved friend, in 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Macdonald was chauffeur and had been with him eight years. He left to run a farm in 1920.

I know you will feel my decision was right, and that this was my duty to my people and my country. My joy would be great if I did not know that you may be sad. But a thousand things may happen, the War may soon be over, the Territorials may not be used in France, and many other unforeseen possibilities may prevent our parting."

Not content with the Highlands as a recruiting ground, he turned to Canada as soon as he got the command, and telegraphed to his old friend, Colonel Alexander Fraser, of Toronto, to publish an appeal for any old Lovat Scouts to join the colours. The response was embarrassing, as those who wished to serve under Lovat were not confined to the Scouts. Over one thousand in all volunteered, and those who could not be taken into the Scouts enlisted in the hope of serving under him. A letter from Lovat to Colonel Fraser explains how matters stood on September 11th.

"GEORGE HOTEL,  
HUNTINGDON,  
ENGLAND.

*September 11th, 1914.*

MY DEAR FRASER,

We have been shifting camp, and as I have just taken over command work has been very brisk. I am sorry I could not take five hundred Canadians. I have only twenty places to be taken for old Scouts, who roll up from every part of the globe. I shall very shortly be raising two Reserve Regiments to support the three Regiments when in the field, and I shall be very happy to offer your son a commission in one of them.

I should very much like to have a squadron of Canadian Highlanders, but I am afraid it would be impossible in fairness to my own men to include them in the 1st Brigade; and if they went in the 2nd they would not be ready except for drafting purposes for some six months to come. I am afraid the Imperial Yeomanry pay is not tempting—one and twopence a day, with sixpence efficiency pay (when they pass the riding and shooting test), one and a penny



*Laura Lovat and the Master, 1914*





separation allowance for married men, and twopence a day per child.

I have got a splendid Brigade of Highlanders, big, fine men, and a very competent lot of officers. I have selected Colonel Augustus Baillie, Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonald, and Lieutenant-Colonel Lumsden, to command the three Reserve regiments. I have about seven hundred recruited for them, but am not pushing on with more till I can get clothes, arms and accoutrements.

All best wishes to you and yours.

Yours sincerely,  
LOVAT."

After a short stay at Huntingdon, where it was inspected by the King, the Brigade was sent to defend a section of the East Coast of England, where an attempted landing was thought likely. How Lovat must have chuckled when reports of an imminent attack came in, as they constantly did, coupled with the intimation that the Navy would, owing to its strategical dispositions, be a long time in arriving on the scene. At Huntingdon he was joined by Major Allhusen (then a civilian), who, by ingenious methods unknown outside the British Army, succeeded, together with his equally civilian chauffeur, in joining the Scouts in a humble capacity and as the only two Englishmen in the force. The winter was an unpleasant one; billets were abominable, weather disgusting and measles rampant. Strung out on a front representing about twenty yards a rifle owing to the fear of invasion, the force had little opportunity to train in single troops, let alone larger units. Lovat did all that was possible in this respect and in arranging the tactical dispositions on every part of his front. After the brigade was moved further south to the Norfolk coast and the invasion scare subsided, training became more possible. From the moment he took command, every hour of the day and a great part of the night was devoted to the training and preparation of the men to fit them to go overseas as a complete and efficient unit. Excelling as before in the capacity of instruction, he devoted his time to practical training in the field and supervised

every detail in the construction of trenches and barbed wire entanglements. By the spring of 1915, the brigade had reached a pitch of efficiency and enthusiasm which would have made them a godsend to any General of Division lucky enough to have them allotted to him. As time passed, officers and men grew restive ; and, but for Lovat's example and influence, the brigade would have been ruined, as were so many of the other Territorial commands, by the more adventurous spirits dribbling off to the seat of war—one of the deplorable consequences of Kitchener's fateful decision.

It was whilst training his brigade on the English coast that Lovat received the news of the death of his brother, Major the Hon. Hugh Fraser, Second-in-Command of the 2nd Battalion of the Scots Guards. The promise Hugh Fraser had given on the Shinty field had not been belied in later life. A magnificent shot and fisherman, his great hands were as dexterous as any woman's. Neither smoking nor drinking alcohol, he was impervious to cold and insensible of fatigue ; and he would spend all day on the hill hind-shooting in winter clad only in a thin threadbare suit and cotton shirt without either waistcoat or underclothes to keep out the wind and snow. Like so many big men of formidable aspect, and like his uncle, " the Cornler," he had the kindest of hearts. He had proved himself an intrepid hunter of elephants and lions in Africa and of tigers, ibex and markhor in India ; and his gigantic physical strength and presence of mind in an emergency had been proved that day in Delhi when the Viceroy narrowly escaped death at the hands of an assassin. Hugh Fraser was one of Lord Hardinge's aides-de-camp and was riding behind him in the procession when the bomb was thrown. He jumped down and found that the Viceregal elephant was so terrified by the explosion that it would not kneel down to allow anyone to get on its back and help the wounded man. Tearing off his red tunic, he picked up a heap of packing-cases seized from a neighbouring shop and, mounting the precarious ladder, lifted the Viceroy, who had fainted from loss of blood, in his arms like a child and carried him down to safety. Well might Lord Hardinge say later that the presence of his aide-de-camp was a thing to pray for in a tight place.

Hugh Fraser went to the front with the Seventh Division

and fell, with most of his brother officers and men, in that first battle of Ypres, in which the old British Army went down on a field of imperishable glory. After heroic feats of valour and the capture of many German prisoners, he led a night-attack on a German trench and was shot through the head, rifle and bayonet in hand, at the head of his men. His last words were: "Here are the Dutchmen. Have at them." His grave was never found, but his name is on the Menin Gate and his memory in the hearts of all who knew him. It was a grievous blow to Lovat, who had shared with his brother all the sports and games of a happy boyhood and youth. It was a grievous loss to the countryside as well, where Hugh was scarcely less loved and admired than was his Chief. Lovat took the blow with a fortitude which he owed to his religion and his courage. He wrote: "We must not be too sorry about old Hugh. We must remember that he was given the chance of showing what was in him and took it. All are not so fortunate."

It may be in place here to give an appreciation of Lovat's quality as a soldier written by a distinguished officer who was on his Staff for seven years. It presents a fine picture of the man at this time:

"My only dictionary defines a leader as 'one who precedes and is followed by others in conduct, opinion, undertaking, etc.' Every word of which is true of Simon even to the etc. Apart altogether from the question of heredity, he was a natural leader of men who influenced his Staff unconsciously—by example rather than precept. We grew in numbers and variety with the War, and some of us must have tried him sorely at times. But whilst he did not suffer fools gladly he was always patient and forbearing so long as people did their best. One got to know the expression on his face when someone let him down rather badly, but the most he would permit himself was a grimace unseen by the delinquent, who only received a kindly correction. There was no shouting or swearing and he was loyal to all his Staff even behind their backs. If, therefore, he got out of everyone the very best work of which they were capable—as he undoubtedly did—it was only what he deserved.

It was a great help to his Staff to realize that superior officers had no terrors for him. If the normal methods of

correspondence did not produce the desired result, he was always prepared to go anywhere and beard anyone.

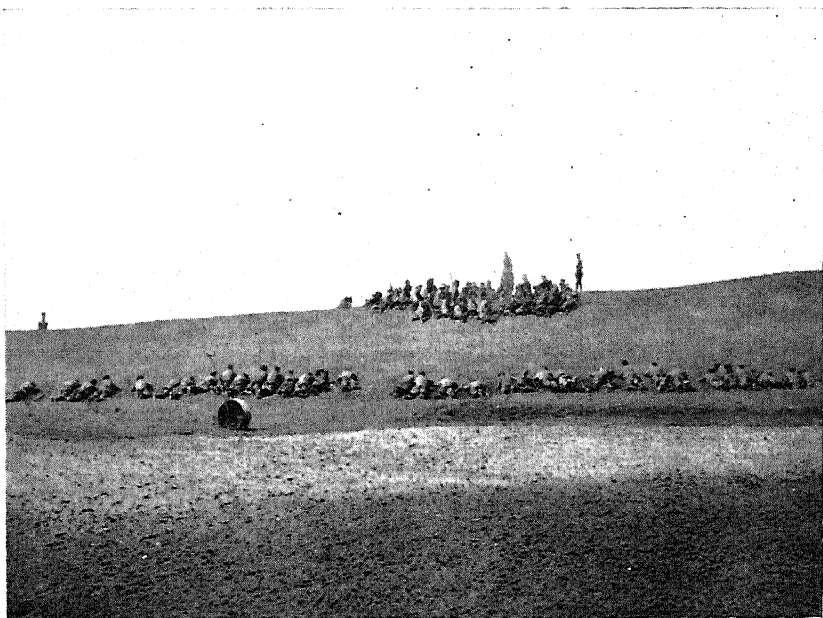
He drove us hard, but not so hard as he drove himself; and if any of us flagged or fell by the wayside he was at once all kindness and solicitude. When the day's work was over, his Mess was more like a family party than a General's Mess. There was no formality of any sort and he was the life and soul of the party and ready to join in anything by way of fun or relaxation so long as it was clean and healthy-minded.

His mind worked rapidly and logically, and if he asked a question he expected a short coherent answer. He had no time for a flow of words or lengthy paragraphs written or spoken. He disliked routine and office work. In peace he avoided the brigade office altogether, and so taught his Staff officer to carry on alone and only run him to ground when it was absolutely necessary. In war it was much the same, with the result that all his Staff had to learn to take responsibility in minor matters so that he might absorb himself, as he always did, in the bigger things.

His mind was never idle, and he was generally wrestling not only with the problem of the moment, but with some other that we perhaps knew nothing about. Even when things were fairly quiet he was always on the stretch, and he gave the impression of regarding even meals as a waste of valuable time, and of being quite indifferent as to what he ate or drank. He was equally indifferent in other matters of bodily comfort—soft lying, fatigue, and heat or cold. Even when his health failed he had no idea of taking care of himself or husbanding his strength; he seemed to drive himself the harder, and there can be no doubt that he wore himself out to an extent from which he never recovered.

I think his 'spiritual home,' in a military sense, was with the Territorials in general and the Lovat Scouts in particular; and he was peculiarly fitted to train and command such troops as he so perfectly understood not only their initial limitations but their great possibilities. He knew the 'Regular' way of doing a thing, but did not the least mind if a unit or an individual did it in an entirely unorthodox way so long as they delivered the goods. In fact he rather enjoyed it.

He had none of the attributes of the Regular 'Brass Hat'



*Lovat Scouts in training on East Coast, 1914*



of derision ; ceremonial, red tape, coloured tabs, ribbons, badges of rank, even rank itself, did not interest him. He could not avoid being a General himself, but promotion did not excite him, and his complete absence of self-seeking was at all times as rare as it was refreshing. Though a fine figure of an officer, he had no vanity as regards his personal appearance in uniform. He was well turned out by Vickers, but would not notice it if his spurs or his General's badges were upside down. On an occasion early in the War, when the King was almost due to arrive for an inspection of his brigade, Simon as usual had run things very fine, but on coming out to the car it was noticed with horror that he had no gloves. There ensued a wild hunt through all the rooms in the hotel, and Simon emerged happy and triumphant with an antique pair used by someone for putting their boots on with.

He expected us to deal with details and surmount difficulties without unnecessary reference to him, but he did not allow himself to be run by his Staff, and his own exercise of the functions of a Commander was never in any doubt. He would listen carefully to any views put forward, good, bad or indifferent, but made his own decisions quite definitely and promptly. He frequently kept his own counsel and would even vanish or do some other unexpected thing, and his Staff had to learn to conform as best they could. What would, I think, have shown his character and military gifts to the best advantage would have been a large command in a war of movement. He did not get rattled, could quickly appreciate an involved situation and give his orders, had a wonderful eye for a country, and read a map upside down better than most people could manage it the right way up.

There was nothing petty about his mind or outlook, and he set a fine example to his Staff in this respect, whilst his kindly and cheerful tact in handling all sorts of difficult people was a model for us to try and follow. He radiated energy and affection and was a Commander we could all love as well as respect wholeheartedly."

At last it was rumoured that the brigade was to go on foreign service and Lovat made one of his sudden disappear-



ances. It was to make sure that he actually got twelve additional machine guns which he had induced Lord Kitchener to promise him in response to a letter.

“ SILFIELD,

HUNSTANTON,

*August 21st, 1915.*

MY DEAR LORD KITCHENER,

You have been a good friend, and one more word from you will put me right about the *twelve Maxims*, and send me out with a light heart and an effective command. I want the twelve Maxims (*a*) because I shall have a small Brigade in numbers, and I know from experience that the task allotted is always the same for every formation irrespective of size. (*b*) If I do not get the guns *now* they will never come till all the Senior G.O.C.s are filled up. (*c*) If the guns have to be taken away from home units they have six weeks before Russia can unhook and turn Westward. (*d*) And finally, I mean to do you credit, but the twelve guns are essential. The last time I asked for machine guns from you was in South Africa. I got them and in almost the last shots of the war knocked out Malan and Company in the Colony, and, as you said at the time, ‘materially assisted at the Peace Conference.’ This time there will be bigger game on foot.

Yours sincerely,

LOVAT.”

Lord Kitchener wrote in pencil across this letter :

“ *Fear not, we hope to let you have the guns.*

KITCHENER.”

He returned successful and the additional guns enabled the force to land at Gallipoli with three batteries of six guns each, organized as a brigade unit and giving an amount of fire power only general at a later date. What Sir Horace

1903-1915]

LORD LOVAT

Smith-Dorrien and the inhabitants of Hunstanton, Norfolk, thought of Lovat and his men will be seen from the following letters :

*" From General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.*

*August 25th, 1915.*

DEAR LADY LOVAT,

I cannot say how kind I think it was of Lord Lovat and you to burden yourselves with me and to give me such a pleasant evening at a time when a stranger, to say the least of it, must have been a grave inconvenience. You have promised to regard me as a friend in need and I expect you to act up to it. No Brigade could go out in this great cause under better auspices, being as it is under a Commander who is heart and soul a leader. I shall watch the news of it, almost as anxiously as you will.

Yours sympathetically,  
H. SMITH-DORRIEN."

*" From the Inhabitants of Hunstanton.*

*August 28th, 1915.*

MY LORD,

We learn with regret of the departure of Your Lordship and your Lovat Scouts. Words fail us when we try to express our respect and admiration for them and the pleasure it has been to have them in our midst. We hope and pray Your Lordship and the troops may be spared to return to your homes and the country for whose freedom you are nobly going out to fight. Had there been time, but we know that there is not, it would have given the residents great pleasure to see the Scouts march through the town headed by the pipers. Hoping Your Lordship may be able to convey to the troops our appreciation of their visit and our earnest wishes for their welfare.

We remain,

THE INHABITANTS OF HUNSTANTON."

And to make the send off complete the King sent a telegram on the eve of departure.

“ September 6th, 1915.

*Brigadier-General Lord Lovat, H.Q. Highland Mounted Brigade,  
Hunstanton.*

I send you and your Brigade my best wishes on your departure to active service. I feel sure that the great and traditional fighting reputation of Scotsmen will be more than safe with you and that your Brigade will spare no effort in the interests of the Empire's cause to bring this war to a victorious conclusion.

GEORGE R.I.”

On September 7th, 1915, the brigade sailed from Devonport for an unknown destination which everyone knew to be Gallipoli. The Royal Horse Artillery Battery was left behind and the force consisted of Headquarters' Staff, Army Service Corps attached, Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, two Regiments of Lovat's Scouts, Signal Troop and Field Ambulance, one hundred and eight officers and two thousand and thirty-three men in all. Certain officers and others who had no business to be there were also smuggled out. After the usual submarine scares, the brigade on September 15th reached Alexandria, where much amusement was caused by the guard parading on the quayside fully equipped with the hated life-belts which the men had been forced to wear on the voyage. No enquiries were made as to who staged this exhibition. Leaving all the saddlery behind in exchange for infantry equipment, the brigade left Alexandria on September 20th and arrived at Mudros three days later.

Extracts of two letters written to his wife during the voyage show how, in spite of his intense preoccupation for the training of himself and his men, he never lost sight either of the welfare of his own people or of the larger issues of the War. The letters offer a striking testimony both to his prescience regarding the submarine campaign and to his



*Officers of the 1st Lovat Scouts at Skegness, 1914, Colonel E. Fraser-Tyler in command*



1903-1915]

## LORD LOVAT

profound reliance on his wife whom he regarded as the officer left in charge of the home-front.

“STEAMSHIP ‘ANDANIA,’

*September 13th, 1915.*

We have had a good voyage, flat calm, and everything going well. Our saddlery and harness only reached us at the last moment and lies in inextricable confusion in the hold of the ship. Our routine is of the dullest, I read most of the day, learn a few Turkish words, study maps and lecture occasionally. I have got a really good lot of Officers, I think well trained. We are working at bomb throwing and a few things that we had not the time or opportunity to do before we started. The Embarkation Officer was most flattering both as to the quality of the men and the time things took to get on board.

There are one or two things I want you to do. First : try and get round as many crofters as you can, especially all those who have sons, brothers or husbands at the front. Secondly : you must have any sailors over from Cromarty who would care to do any shooting or fishing during the few hours' leave that they can get. Thirdly : I want you to see Garrioch about the food supply (Scottish Report) and give him the lines on which I think we should take action. I enclose letter with my views. Please go over it carefully and work out some of the details. I think it very important in view of the fact that the War may last another year or more, and the certainty that, if this is so, Germany will have larger and better submarines ready and will do her utmost to starve this country out. To what extent she will succeed will depend on the time that she can continue fighting : but I feel very certain that a moment will come when food will become a difficulty in England, and the steps should be taken now to increase her food supply. This can easily be done with a little forethought and organization.”

*Enclosed in letter of September 13th.*

“ HEADQUARTER,  
1/1ST HIGHLAND MOUNTED BRIGADE,  
ON BOARD S.S. ‘ ANDANIA,’  
13th September, 1915.

I had just time to look over the Report of the Scottish Food Supply Committee before leaving for the Dardanelles. It seemed to me a reasonable document and that it was our duty to take action along the lines suggested.

Apart from the question of one's own conscience, the fact cannot be lost sight of that, should submarine warfare be more effective in 1916 than it has been in this year, the owners of blocks of unoccupied ground will find themselves in a very invidious position should food shortage arise, unless they have taken steps to develop that ground as far as lay in their power. Whether there is any general action taken by proprietors or not, I intend myself to act on these lines :

I. To extend experiments that I have been making in the last few years of summering Highland cattle in deer forests—wintering them in the woods and low ground.

II. Allowing crofters, smallholders and farmers to run stirks for the period of the War in forests, under regulations free of charge except for the payment of one man as sole cattle guard, this cattle guard while in the forest under my contro<sup>l</sup>. Leave to graze granted in the following order :

- 1.—To men with dependents at the war.
- 2.—Smallholders.
- 3.—To dealers amongst smallholders, farmers, etc.

III. To throw open woods over twenty-five years old for grazing, in all cases for cattle, in some cases for sheep also.

IV. To double the number of hinds killed in most of the forest ground, thereby adding to the food supply, not improbably improving the forest, and certainly making more grass available for grazing cattle stock next spring.

V. Plough up certain policy lands, including rabbit warren, bad grass land etc.

Some, in many cases all, of these steps could be taken on Highland proprietors' and some Lowland proprietors' ground. To do any good and to get over prejudice it would be advisable to make the action general by some form of organization—if possible avoiding advertisement.

Do you think it would be possible to get the help of John Dalkeith<sup>1</sup> and get him, through the Land Federation or otherwise, to summon a meeting of representative proprietors and get them to pledge themselves to some common line of action and stimulate their less progressive friends?

The factor, generally contumacious, always hostile to new ideas and often the ruler of his landlord, would naturally be in possession and would have to be dealt with.

There is a large section of mankind who believe that 'good enough for my father, good enough for me,' and to whom such trifles as European wars are not considered as trespassing on the shibboleths of a lifetime. There are also those individuals, all too large a number, who dare not risk any prospect of a possible let. The first two classes can only be dealt with by public opinion, precept and example. The third class can be met with the argument that if all proprietors take common action, the shooting tenant, even if an objector to Highland cattle (not my experience), will find no forest clear of the beasts.

I am writing to-day to Mackintosh,<sup>2</sup> K. J. Mackenzie,<sup>3</sup> and Dalkeith. If you could see K. J. we might get ahead.

I hope to see Bardy,<sup>4</sup> in the Dardanelles. He should be able successfully to divide persons into the usual two camps, which is the nearest approach to common action Perthshire ever attains to.

Yours ever,"

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There was no Catholic priest on board when Lovat took the Scouts to South Africa and he himself used every

<sup>1</sup> Now the Duke of Buccleuch.

<sup>2</sup> The Mackintosh of Mackintosh.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Kenneth J. Mackenzie, of Gairloch.

<sup>4</sup> The Marquess of Tullibardine, now Duke of Atholl.



Sunday to read the prayers, the Gospel and Epistles to such of them as were Catholics. On this voyage he was luckier, as will be seen from a passage from another letter to his wife.

“ STEAMSHIP ‘ANDANIA,’

*September 18th, 1915.*

It has been bitterly cold for two days ; to-day is a flat calm and lovely clear day. Imbros is in sight and by four o'clock we should see the shores of Gallipoli.

I feel in this last year work and trouble has kept me so engaged that you have had the weariest of times, to say nothing of your sorrows. Well, the job has been done, not, perhaps, well, but as well as I can do it, and I am satisfied that I am taking into battle a splendid body of officers and men, trained, equipped and ready. What is to come is on the lap of the gods. One great consolation is that all our Catholics have been at Mass and Holy Communion every day on this ship. This means that we are all more ready to meet whatever may betide, and more prepared for death than at any other period of our lives. I am certain, God willing, that just as I go out with all the courage I have (which is not much) and all the misery I have of leaving you (which is overwhelming) so you will work on, looking after the children and our people and resigning yourself to God's Will as I do, and that in this no death can part us.”

Just before reaching Mudros Lovat gives the impressions of what lies ahead in another short extract to his wife.

“ STEAMSHIP ‘ANDANIA,’

*September 22nd, 1915.*

We get into Lemnos to-morrow. From there we get orders. We will probably be in the same division as Scatters.<sup>1</sup> This will be amusing and we should have some laughter as well as bullets. We have had some of the forty extra officers we took on at Alexandria lecturing on various subjects. One

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Sir Matthew Wilson.

gathers the staff work has been bad in these parts, that trench fighting generally is not on the same level of excellence as in Flanders on either side, that the Turk has better bombs, guns etc., and more of them than we have. We have had a squally, beastly day running up between the Greek Islands. We have a cruiser escort and tack about at every angle for fear of submarines."

In the bitter cold of Mudros the realities of war were at last in view. The outlook was unpromising and reports from the front most pessimistic. Nor did a lecture by the principal bacteriologist and sanitary expert do much to raise the spirits of men who were told they would shortly be a certain prey to disease. But the visit was useful; for Lovat, on the strength of what he heard, demanded and secured for his whole command additional entrenching tools which were the salvation of the force later. On September 26th the brigade was put into smaller ships and sailed for Suvla where they were landed in the dark without any casualties. The conditions in Gallipoli have often been described and are once more illustrated in two letters written by Lovat to his wife from the Peninsula.

" October 1st, 1915.

I have not had time to write for four days. We had a most successful landing without losing a man. A great hurry and rush, but just got the men underground as daylight broke. We had seven casualties the second day from shell fire, six yesterday, and only one to-day. The men have worked well and are now getting cunning in getting to ground as the shrapnel arrives. We are situated in a great amphitheatre. We occupy the stalls, the Turks the gallery and the boxes, so you can imagine who can see best, and who has the best time! As long as they have no high explosive they will not do us much harm. We are getting dug in every day and, though the wet may lead to hardship, I feel confident in the end that we will do the obvious line of attack, which, I believe, if done with sufficient *order, method and strength*, will be bound to lead to success and give us good Winter quarters even if it doesn't finish this 'show.' No one can have any idea of the

failures committed here. I have always had a poor opinion of the soldier politician, but I can hardly believe some of the stories which I have every reason to believe to be authentic. Even now there is much to complain of; water is, of course, all-important, but there is no means of boiling the men's supply and will be less later. Chlorate of lime is necessary for sterilising what one cannot boil—there is none. Flies spread disease, there is no disinfectant to keep them from the latrines, etc. Wood and iron are essential for head cover from shrapnel, for the Brigade Headquarters I have got seven planks and one sheet. I want five hundred times that amount for the brigade lines. I hear the Y.M.C.A. buildings are to be put up (and advertised at home no doubt) at Mudros and Imbros. There is no advertisement in looking after the fighting line. Well, so much for a grumble! I told the Principal Medical Officer of the Division what I thought of the sanitary and medical arrangements and the style of report that ought to be sent in. On the whole we have had a good time, glorious weather, sea bathing every day. Ten days in reserve, then we take over the fire trenches from Bardie.<sup>1</sup> I have been over them. They are well dug and safe, and though no advance can be made from them (the whole front being dominated from the hills) still, unless it rains hard, we can lie there in comfort and much more safely than in the reserve trenches. Here any one may be hit any time of the day, but care and forethought divide the risk by ten, and you may be quite sure ninety per cent of that care is being taken by all of us."

"October 8th, 1915.

We are moving into the front line to-day. The 1st Regiment moved in last night. There has been a good deal of sickness in the last day or two, mostly amongst the men who have drunk unboiled water. I think the cooler weather will lessen the trouble. The flies are still very bad. It is difficult to imagine it but they are still short of disinfectants *after six months here*. They have not the proper sterilisers for the water and not enough fuel to get the water boiled. I talked to the

<sup>1</sup> Now the Duke of Atholl.

Principal Medical Officer like a father on arrival, and I think, finally, moved him, as he wrung his hands and said he had appealed again and again to Imbros, and vainly. I told him that someone would be hung over this and that he had better take ship at once to G.H.Q. to see that it was not him.

Two Turks surrendered to Willie Macdonald in the front line to-day, both Christians. The Christian Turks are not at all anxious to fight. Tuke, Nairn, Bohill are all down to-day and Roberts wounded. We are short of Medical Officers ; if you can scare up a good one at home, young, hard and active it would be a Godsend.

I am going over to Suvla this afternoon and hope to visit Anzac later. We are three miles from the North of Anzac and seven miles from Suvla. Most evenings, 3.30 to 5, we have a tea picnic on the beach and spy the hills and bathe. An occasional shell comes over. The local theory being that if you dive deep enough and quick enough you will not be hit. The Turks rarely shell the beach viciously, just an occasional shell to show that they see, but do not wish to interfere with our bathing. They fight wonderfully fairly, allowing parties out to fetch in the wounded and never shoot at hospital ships.

Everyone speaks of Charles<sup>1</sup> and his great gallantry. He simply did not know the meaning of the word fear. He was terribly wounded and this coming after two former wounds on an already very debilitated system was too much for his delicate physique. His spirit was indomitable and they say here that never was there a more lion-hearted officer. His men adored him, and his pluck and gallantry will never be forgotten."

Lovat had already a touch of his old enemy, dysentery, when the last of these letters was written. Getting up again whenever he felt a little better, he eluded the eye of his faithful Staff Officer, Colonel Allhusen, on October 12th, and walked far too much that day. The doctor put him in hospital in

<sup>1</sup> Lady Lovat's brother, the Hon. Charles Lister, who, although in the Diplomatic Service, managed to get to the front in spite of the rule laid down at the beginning of the War that no member of the Service was to leave it.

the evening, and it was hoped that the enforced rest would soon cure him, as his case was not then really serious. But the disease soon became so and on October 19th, he was put in a hospital ship in a very weak state. Vickers was in hospital too, but fortunately well enough to go away with his master. Had they gone straight home he might have got well quickly, but Malta is no place to recover in and he was put in hospital there. At first he made out, and probably really believed, that the attack was a mild one. His first letter to his wife is in his most sanguine vein :

“ST. ANDREW’S HOSPITAL,

MALTA,

*October 29th, 1915.*

I am here, having been sent back after a sharp attack of dysentery, but hope I shall be up in a day or two and back on the Peninsula. It has been a less severe attack than the one I had in South Africa and I have been well looked after, and I am confident I shall soon get back to the Brigade. It is a good omen starting this campaign the same way as I started the South African. I got dysentery there at once, and after a few weeks was well for the rest of the War. I had not the heart to write you until I felt a bit better. This alone accounts for my having missed three or four days.”

And he was writing in the same style to Colonel Allhusen :

“It has been too miserable. Every time I have said ‘one day more and I will write that I am well,’ down I go again. For a fortnight I have been alternately up half a day and wholly in bed.”

He ends up “Good-bye, old Fred, shall soon be with you—Please God in three weeks.” But “old Fred” knew better and wrote to him straight to Beaufort that he must get the brigade out of Gallipoli to somewhere else where he

could resume command. The force was wasting away doing no good, and the magnificent men could not be replaced.

He began to lose heart at the beginning of November and wrote some bitter reflections on the Gallipoli muddle to his wife.

“ ST. ANDREW’S HOSPITAL,

MALTA,

November 3rd, 1915.

I am keeping up my strength though not recovering as quickly as I had hoped, and find time passing slowly. We get papers and the *Malta Chronicle* which has Reuter’s wires. I have just seen the Prime Minister’s speech. He has taken the familiar line of disarming criticism by taking upon himself the responsibility for everything. I daresay it is for the best. Asquith is certainly the ablest thinker and the only man who could keep a National Cabinet together. It is now abundantly clear to all who care to read that the method of conduct of the Dardanelles was a *Naval enterprise, pure and simple*, with Fisher opposed and Kitchener determined to take no part. The Prime Minister as Head of the Government was, as he said, no less responsible for the project than Winston, but it is more than clear that Winston alone was the inspiration of this tragedy. The Gallipoli expedition properly carried out would have been brilliant; great strategic possibilities and with combined action (Army and Navy) very little risk; carried out piece-meal, sailors first, dribblets of soldiers second, more dribblets of soldiers third, starvation of guns fourth, failure to observe Balkan trouble fifth, plus final debacle on arrival of guns and supplies through Serbia, it was disaster. It will be up-to-date and probably to all eternity as sordid and miserable a chapter of amateur enterprise as ever was written in our history.”

A few days later Vickers sent an unbiased account of Lovat’s true state in a letter to Lady Lovat.

LORD LOVAT

[1903-1915]

“ ST. ANDREW’S HOSPITAL,  
MALTA,

*November 8th, 1915.*

MY LADY,

I beg to take the liberty of writing your Ladyship, but I thought you would like to know how his Lordship is going on. He is much better the last two or three days, he quite thought when he came here that he would be fit in a fortnight, but the Doctor on the ship told me that he was very much worse then he thought he was. After being here a week he went back a lot, but he is gradually picking up now and he was well enough this morning to go to the bath. The Doctors here think they will be sure to have to send him home ; but it will break his heart as he is so keen to go back to the Peninsula and the Doctors begin to see this and perhaps may change their minds. He looks most terribly ill and I do not know what to hope for him. I am quite well now. I am looking after his Lordship altogether. I think whatever happens we will be sure to be here another month. His Lordship does not think this, but the Sister told me he would be certain to be that if not more. Lord Vernon is here, My Lady, with dysentery. It will take him all his time to get over it. He is very bad. Eight Scottish Horse Officers came in yesterday, very bad. Dysentery and enteric is terrible just now in the Peninsula. The Scottish Horse have only just about a quarter of their men left. A few of the Scouts have died here in hospital, not very many, but it is terrible to see the number of cases coming in, often two and three hundred in a day.

Hoping Your Ladyship is quite well, Master Shimi and Miss Magdalen.

I beg to remain, My Lady,

Yours obediently,

JOHN VICKERS.”

After this he seems to have taken a turn for the better, and, anxious concerning the wounded and sick at home, invoked, as he invariably did, the help of his wife.

" ST. ANDREW'S HOSPITAL,

MALTA,

November 12th, 1915.

I am again splendid, no return of dysentery for ten days, but I am not going to rush things and give myself fourteen more days. There is one thing which has been worrying me for some time and now that our men are not sent home on sick leave it comes to be *important*.

*Convalescent Hospital at Beaufort.*

We have got beds and have made no use of them. We have a large house and are doing nothing with it. We have a lot of men from France going home invalided and I would suggest (One) that you get into touch with the War Office over Convalescent Homes—how they are run, what it costs per head a week over general allowances. (Two) Whether they could get some competent person to run it when you are away as I know you have to be a good deal in the South with your Father. (Three) *Rooms available*. I would clear out all the downstairs living rooms and calculate you could get in sixty or seventy men without any trouble. I would suggest that you should attempt to arrange that the Regiments with special claims would be the Highland Mounted Brigade, Seaforths, Cameron Highlanders. I do hope you will be able to put this through.

Things can hardly look worse in Gallipoli. I take it we shall have to leave as soon as Nish goes. Smyrna and the cutting of the railway line in Asia Minor should then be our objective. I suspect it will be passive defence in Egypt. Up to date our higher rulers have foreseen nothing, have planned nothing, have learned nothing, have made no attempt sanely to grasp the situation."

As it turned out, Beaufort was never actually used as a hospital. The house was offered to and accepted by the Admiralty who thought, reasonably enough, that it might prove useful in the expected eventuality of naval engagements in northern waters. But none ever took place so the hospital was never made use of.



Lovat arrived in London on November 16th, 1915, and though still very ill with dysentery, saw a stream of important visitors in hospital. He was racked with anxiety for the safety of the Gallipoli army and used every influence to persuade the authorities that speedy evacuation could alone avert an appalling disaster. It is tempting, though idle, to speculate whether he would have taken the same view had he still been on the spot. His strong sense of reality and complete absence of personal pride in anything he himself undertook or did inclines one to believe that he would. In any case, the news of evacuation, successful beyond the hopes of the most optimistic, came as an inexpressible relief. But his health did not improve in London ; and it was almost as difficult to get a man out of a military hospital as out of Dartmoor gaol. At last the importunity and wire-pulling of his wife succeeded. At Christmas she carried him off to Beaufort, where his native air acted like a charm. In a few days he was a changed man and rapidly recovered some of his health. But on February 10th he telegraphed to Colonel Allhusen that he had not passed the Medical Board and was doubtful of going East again, and on March 10th he wrote to say he had been passed for duty but with a recommendation of two months at home. He had sent a scheme to General Sir John French for reorganizing the yeomanry, and French had recommended him for a yeomanry division when fit. Naturally Lovat was pressing "Old Fred" to join him, and all this time he was pulling strings to help his old brigade.

The doings of the Highland Mounted Brigade after Lovat left them do not fall within this narrative ; but it is worth mentioning that, under Brigadier-General Archibald Stirling of Keir who succeeded him in command, they carried out with the greatest success and hardly any casualties an attack carefully planned in every detail by Lovat before he went sick. In congratulating them on their exploit, General Peyton's only regret was that Lovat had not been able to see the result. It has often been said that the War threw up no British General of outstanding merit and genius, and there is some truth in the statement. That such a General existed potentially in Lovat none of those who served under him doubted ; and it was one of the misfortunes of the War that he should have been sent to the most unhealthy theatre of all.

He had a certain dread of it from the first, as he feared a recurrence of his Abyssinian and South African illness ; and, had he refused the command of the Highland Mounted Brigade, he would certainly have soon been offered a command which would have probably taken him to France. But it never occurred to him to refuse anything which either he or his superiors considered it his duty to accept. Nor did he once express the slightest disappointment at the ill-fortune which put an end to the active military career on which his dearest hopes had been set. It was one of his abiding characteristics to dismiss the past and give little heed to the present. All his mind was on the future and, when his judgment was at fault, the reason lay in his looking too far ahead and miscalculating the time-lag of events. He would often dismiss someone as of little use with the remark : " He is always thinking of the past."

## CHAPTER IX

COMMAND OF THE SECOND CYCLISTS DIVISION (TERRITORIAL FORCE)  
SERVICE IN FRANCE TRAINING AND COMMANDING LOVAT SCOUTS  
(SHARPSHOOTERS).

1915-1916

ALTHOUGH Lovat soon recovered fairly normal health at Beaufort, it was clear that he could not be allowed to resume command of his brigade in such an unhealthy place as the valley of the Struma, where it had gone after the evacuation of the Peninsula ; and at the beginning of March he relinquished his appointment. With it went the rank of Brigadier-General which, like that of Commodore in the Navy, was only held while actually in command. He resumed it again the following month on being given the command of the Second Cyclists' Division (Territorial Force) and in May he was made a Temporary Major-General in the Army. The Division was only a Home Defence Unit, but had a full Divisional Staff, including three General Staff Officers headed by Colonel the Honourable Henry Guest. The four brigades were composed of second line yeomanry mounted on American bicycles and were quartered first at Colchester and then at Ipswich. In spite of the uninspiring nature of this force, commanded, as it was, by officers either unfit for active service or only anxious to get away to some more interesting place, Lovat brought to the training of the division the same energy and method as have already been described. But it must have been with relief that he relinquished his command and his temporary rank of Major-General on being ordered to France on special duty in November, 1916.

For some time Lovat had been speculating on possible new ways of making the best tactical use of some of the men

of his former command ; and, when Major Ewen Grant of Glenmoriston, an old and trusted Scouts Officer, was invalided home early in 1916, Lovat enabled him and Colonel William Macdonald to train as snipers some picked men from the Third Reserve Battalion of Lovat Scouts. Soon afterwards during a visit to France Lovat saw that observation was of far greater importance than sniping, so the training was changed accordingly. But the force that came into being was known officially until the end of the War as "Lovat Scouts (Sharpshooters)." As suitable men were obtained, they were formed into groups of one officer and twenty-one other ranks and trained first at St. Andrew's and then at Beaulieu. The training was in all branches of observation for intelligence and artillery ; and it was on special duty connected with the training that Lovat was sent to France at the end of November, 1916, with the rank of Colonel, Territorial Force. As soon as he got there he wrote to his wife a letter which shows that his interest in housing and forestry were very much alive.

" G.H.Q.

25th November, 1916.

Arrived here safely and left not less than half my cold on the *trajet*. I go up to the first lot of Scouts to-day. Shall spend three days at that end of the line, and then shall work down to Putty<sup>1</sup> and Harry Raw,<sup>2</sup> and from there on to another General, or to Henry Wilson.<sup>3</sup> I think all is satisfactory as yet. The men have done good work, but I am not sure which way developments, if any, will go.

My address for letters for four days will be, C/o G.H.Q., 1st Corps ; then for seven days, or until further notice, C/o G.H.Q., 3rd Corps. Open any letters of mine you think of the bill or advertisement order, and do not send me any Parliamentary notices. See that all the rest of the letters come straight on, and give my address to the Estate Office.

<sup>1</sup> General Sir William Pulteney.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir Henry Rawlinson.

<sup>3</sup> General Sir Henry Wilson.

Do not mistake any Housing Commission or Forestry Papers for Parliamentary notices.

No news here. Have seen many friends."

Four days later he gave his impressions of the Front, which he had not visited, apparently, since July.

"H.Q., 3RD CORPS,  
30th November, 1916.

I had a long walk yesterday with Putty<sup>1</sup> and another Corps commander over the back of the high ground from Martinpuich to the sugar factory above Pozières along the ridge of High Wood. It was a cold, misty day, and one could see little or nothing except the desolation and misery of the immediate area passed over. Roads, railways, etc., are being pushed on, the men are being 'hutted,' and mud is being fought in every possible way. Most of the ground has been cleared up, but every here and there one sees a rifle protruding, a half-buried foot or a boot with the sock still on it left in the state when it had been torn from the man.

The wet, cold misery of everything is terrible. The men seem everywhere in good spirits, plodding through the mud, either toiling up to the front with supplies (owing to the mist they can work up to the front line by day) or coming back dirty and mud-stained after a spell in the trenches. Hot baths are already established, and lines of Tommies are to be seen waiting to get their scrub and change.

The horses are perhaps the most miserable objects to be seen, they have lost sadly in condition from July, when they were the fittest lot I had ever seen. They have now got their full bearlike winter coats, and soon will be under better conditions in special 'standings,' and in some cases head-cover.

To-day I went over to see the Scouts in the a.m. They are giving great satisfaction and have been well trained. They are not yet in the line but will be next week.

I bought myself a pair of boots, best trench pattern, for 35/-. Best value I have ever seen. I shall practise in them

<sup>1</sup> General Sir W. Pulteney.

with two pairs of socks to-morrow when I go up to the line with Dobie (Scout Officer). In a few days we may see some Germans.

Just returned from a run over to Fatty Cavan<sup>1</sup> and Frank Hardy."<sup>2</sup>

The fall of Mr. Asquith was now imminent, and Lady Lovat's relationship to the Tennant family made her an admirable informant of what was going on behind the scenes. That Lovat welcomed the change of Government is clear from another letter to his wife.

"H.Q., 1ST CORPS,  
10th December, 1916.

Your letters seem very well informed ! I think things are very much for the better if we get Lloyd George, Labour, and Carson (and, I hope, Milner). Let us hope the weak Bonar Law may be no drag on a definitely forward wheel. I trust we can rope in the best of Labour. The Liberals (Grey, Samuel, Montagu, etc.), will be no loss, though I hope we stick to Jack Tennant, Runciman and Pease. I wonder if the Radicals are plotting to oust Lloyd George already. I can imagine an early "cave," but with Simon and Haldane as the tail end of any Radical body I think they will have no difficulty with the nation.

The remainder of the Scouts have now arrived, but the weather has been too bad to get out to the observation posts which we have chosen. We had a very interesting day yesterday with a Scout Officer of a Brigade, and went to see all the forward posts in this area."

Three days later the news of Germany's so-called peace move had reached Lovat, whose comment is eminently sensible :

"G.H.Q.,  
13th December, 1916.

I have come into G.H.Q. for an hour or two to see about what they want in the way of more Scouts. I think they will

<sup>1</sup> General Lord Cavan.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir F. Gathorne-Hardy.

probably want double the number as the majority of Army Corps have applied for them. The men are certainly doing admirable work, and with more training and more efficient officers could double their work. We had two most damnable days, snow and sleet and bitterly cold. My 'lumber boots' from Inverness were a godsend. I was dry all day. With your woolly and leather waistcoat added to the British-warm you bought me I am able to defy any ordinary day. I spent last night at Putty's<sup>1</sup> on my way here. My plans depend on what instructions I get. It would appear probable that I shall be in France till the middle of January, and then come home to recruit and train for a bit. The talk here is all of to-day's news of peace overtures. I wonder if they have forwarded any terms? I think we ought to say that we would discuss terms, but only on Germany going back, as a preliminary measure, to her pre-War boundaries. The offer is obviously only a move to get cohesion at home and impress people abroad; there is no reason why we should not strike at the bluff and show up the sham."

After a visit to the Commander-in-Chief Lovat was well satisfied with the performance of his men, and the work clearly was to his liking.

"G.H.Q. 15th December, 1916.

I saw Haig yesterday. He wishes a group of observers for every corps (i.e. fourteen more groups). This is very satisfactory as showing the work done is appreciated. I have written to Ewen Grant<sup>2</sup> to get all the men he can and to push on with getting suitable men out of the regiment at home. My plans at present are here for a week, then to the 6th Corps for a week, then to the 4th Corps, then up North to the original Corps and home about 15th January to recruit and re-organise. I shall probably be a week in London, then at Edinburgh and Beaufort, possibly Outer Islands. How long I stay will depend on orders, and whether and when they want me out again. The work here is very interesting. Every day leads to minor developments, and I really think useful

<sup>1</sup> General Sir W. Pulteney.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Ewen Grant of Glenmoriston.

work is being done. What do people at home say of the Germans' peace overtures? Out here it has made no impression. It was expected and put at its proper value as an effort to draw Germans together and impress sentimentalists. It seems about as clumsy an effort as German diplomacy is capable of."

His description of a day observing at the Front is certainly free from false sentiment :

" H.Q. 3rd CORPS.

*28th December, 1916.*

The last two days with David Campbell<sup>1</sup> were very enjoyable. We had lovely weather and spotted quite a number of Germans. Amongst others we found out some Headquarters from which smart officers emerged from time to time, only a thousand yards behind the lines. It will be 'done in' with 'heavies' by the time you get this letter. We saw about forty-five Germans in small parties one day, and about thirty the other, all within machine-gun range, but the co-ordination of observation and machine-guns was not good enough to take advantage of the targets.

How precious the babies are. I love their remarks! Write more of them.

There is no news here. I came over to see the 3rd Corps General Staff to-day. Spymen are still at the sniping school. In about four days they will be at work. By that time I hope to have gone over a good deal of the ground."

Good results soon satisfied Lovat and in a letter written on the last day of the year he is planning to get better ones.

" H.Q. 3rd CORPS.

*31st December, 1916.*

I go to dine with Haldane,<sup>2</sup> Corps Commander for the Infantry. One of those dull military dinners, I expect, which are the delight of the soldiery. I trust we shall not be gashed on our way back. We had a very good day yesterday.

<sup>1</sup> General the Hon. D. Campbell.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir I. Haldane.



Saw a lot of Germans, and got the guns on to two targets, one with considerable effect. To-day we had a perfect light. I saw over two hundred and fifty Germans myself from one of our observation points. We marked out several working parties at our end of the line. We, however, failed to get the artillery on to them. They may have been luckier elsewhere. After to-morrow the men will occupy the places I have chosen as advanced observation posts, and we shall see a good deal more, and get more and better co-operation with the artillery. I am going over to G.H.Q. shortly and will write from there if any decisions are arrived at as to future work. I do not think the fourth lot of Scouts have started yet, but I have not heard from Ewen Grant. I expect that he has written to the 3rd Corps and letters take weeks to get from one part of France to another.

I have not heard from Garrioch for some time. I do not know if more wood has been taken by the Government or not. I have written to-day to hustle him up."

The New Year opened with a letter of no great military interest to his eldest son, aged six.

" 1st January, 1917.

To the Master of Lovat. (Aged 6.)

MY DEAREST SHIMI,

Thank you very much for your lovely long letter, which was so well written in such lovely letters all different colours. I also liked the shaded goat very much indeed. I am so glad to hear that Farmer Iles has so many pigs. Daddy will have to get some so as not to be beaten by an Englishman. The airships here go up every day. The British look like this (drawing) and the Huns look like this (drawing) *much* smaller because they are so far away.

Good-bye Shimi,

YOUR LOVING DADDY."

His son's letter, to which this was the reply, was as follows :  
(in block letters).

"MY DEAR DADDY,

Mr. Iles has 47 pigs in one field and 14 in another.

Lots of love to you Daddy from your Shimi."

Another letter of the same day contains criticisms of the Higher Command which have been voiced by many since Lovat wrote it. The moderation of the criticisms is as notable as is Lovat's optimism, though this was a mere shadow of that of the General Staff at the opening of 1917.

"G.H.Q. 1st January, 1917.

I had a talk with the Intelligence Officer, and hear our men continue to do good work and are still in demand. We shall probably have the next lot on the area next to the present one. That will mean one lot will be with each army, and as they all get good reports and are considered valuable it will help further demands.

I wonder what was settled in Rome this week. I suppose the truth will be out in a day or two. Salonica—Yes or No?

There is no news here that is given or can be passed on. It is curious how out of touch with the army many of the higher Commanding Officers are, all good men with the best intentions, but none, or few, of them with discernment of what the fighting soldier is saying or thinking. Feeling varies with various brigades, but the last lots down at the Somme during the 'swamp period' are very bitter with what are called 'back blocks.' It will all straighten out in time as the men are well and the discomforts are less than last year. I am on the *up-grade* myself in confidence, largely inspired by the French who say the finish is in October this year, if not earlier. We have a heavy weight to carry in many of our Higher Commanders, our partly trained Junior Officers and our lack of foresight as a nation. However the men are well and determined, and the finest infantry in the world, and the German is definitely downhearted."

At this time the Germans were, all unknown to the British Staff, already preparing for their disconcerting

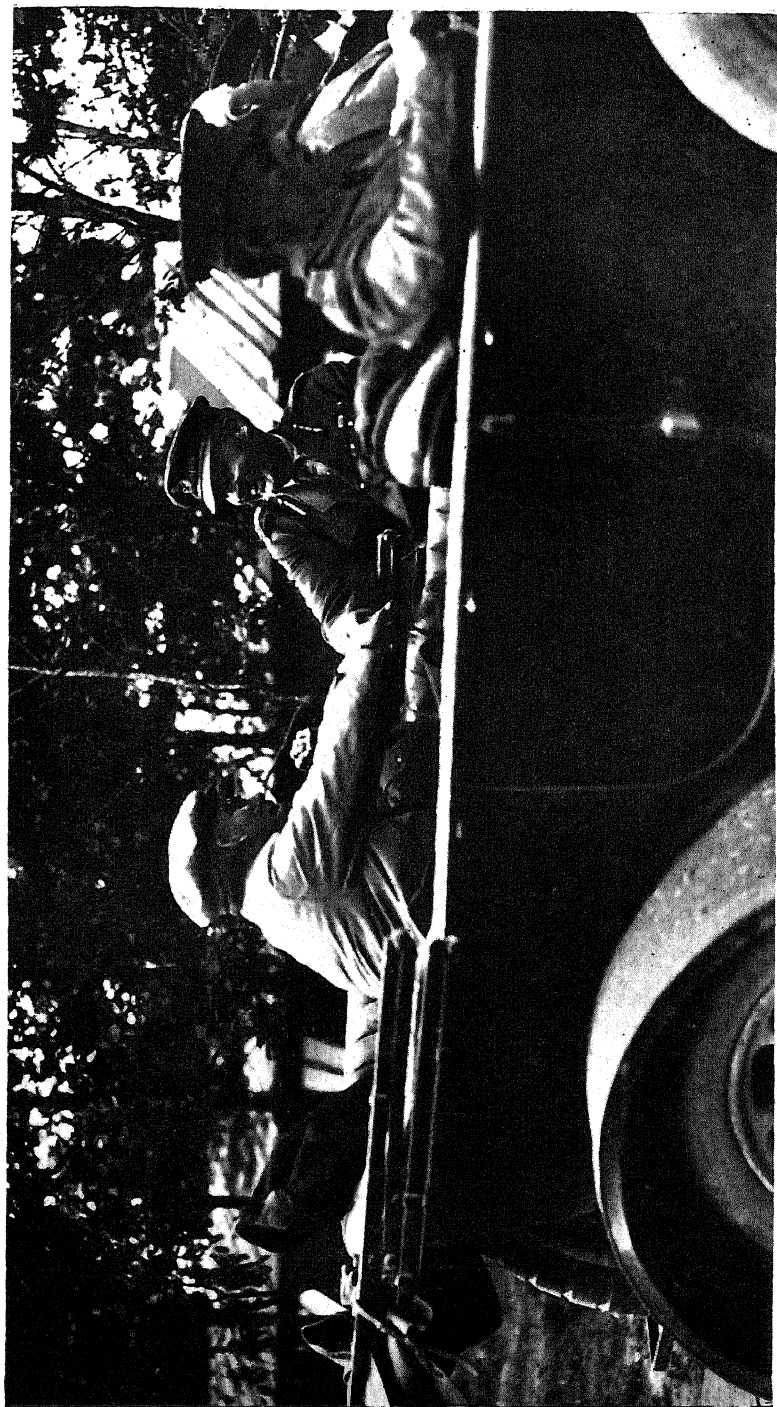
retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and this may explain the "defensive spirit" which Lovat notices in his letters. Accustomed himself to be in the closest touch with his junior officers and his men, he has little sympathy with any of the Higher Command who are not ; and he notes other characteristics of our Army at this time.

" 6TH CORPS,

*2nd January, 1917.*

Your last letters came here in three days, which is the best for a long time. I shall be here for a few days, as I have not straightened everything out yet. There is plenty to shoot at but communication with the artillery is poor. To-day we had a really good spying day and saw nearly a thousand Germans from the whole of the posts. These included a company drilling, a column of two hundred and fifty infantry and 30/40 waggons. We got artillery on to three targets and got one direct hit, another party of fifty got the fright of their lives. A shell actually cut the road on which they were marching, but as far as we could see with no one hurt. A crater visible at three thousand yards was blown out, yet no one remained on the ground. I took one of the Generals and showed him the country and the Germans' main 'runs.' He appeared to digest some of it. We are a stupid race I fear, and most of us get old too early. I am rather despondent about the higher leading. There is an absence of 'catch' and drive about it, and not much originality. The younger Brigadiers and the Brigade-Majors impress me most. There they are still in touch with the fighting material, which is magnificent. The confidence of the men and Junior Officers (many of whom know little) is wonderful.

The regimental tradition in many regiments is still good. Of course the subalterns are not what they were, and insufficiently trained, but there is still a streak of good stuff and it will tell. It is a wonderful show. Sometimes one wonders how it is so good ; sometimes why it fails in those things one would think it should be most strong. There is no doubt here, as elsewhere, that we are top dog ; and that the German spirit is a spirit of the defensive. We hold 'No



*Loyal in France*



Man's Land' by night, and any party of three Tommies would chase out double their strength and think nothing of it. This is wonderful and means a good deal. If only in the next push they can be well put in. *Time right, barrage right and troops at hand to exploit the victory.* The three have never come off together except locally on a small scale. I am not a 'cavalry sweep' man, but I clearly see the advantage of big numbers 'up and through' quickly, *but on foot.*

I wish the authorities in this stationary War would order the wire to be cut simultaneously in five places in front of each battalion in the firing line. It would give us not only 'No Man's Land,' but the enemies' first line from Ypres to the Somme."

"Frank Hardy"<sup>1</sup> had been seconded from the Grenadiers to go out to South Africa in 1901 with the second lot of Lovat Scouts of which he had commanded a squadron much to Lovat's satisfaction. Lovat knew his men would be given a good chance under him and gives an interesting account of a successful and an unsuccessful raid. His German must have been pretty rusty after thirty years of disuse.

"G.H.Q.

8th January, 1917.

The delay in getting the fourth lot of Scouts out is tiresome. I shall now not be home till the end of January. It will be amusing having the fourth lot under Frank Hardy's charge. I shall be able probably to get them settled in quicker, and shall also get their work taken advantage of by artillery at an earlier stage. We had two raids in the 6th Corps, one of them most successful. It was very interesting and instructive working out the details. Artillery barrage is really wonderful if it goes off successfully, the men practically walk up a hundred yards behind the shell fire which creeps forward on a broad front with an advance of fifty yards a minute (even you could walk that pace). When successful, the sides, or in military language, the flanks, of the advance are covered to screen them from machine-gun fire. 'Heavies' in the meanwhile lift from the front trench to

<sup>1</sup> General the Honourable Sir Francis Gathorne-Hardy.

counter battery work. The men go over the parapet at a quiet saunter, with their heads low as if to avoid their own shells which swish by close overhead. They are amazingly cool and cross 'No Man's Land,' jump the first line trenches and saunter on to the second line, while the second wave of attackers mops up in the first line, bombs out to the flanks, and holds on till the forward wave or waves have swept on to their objectives, cleared them up and returned. Most of the work is done with bombs, knobkerries and bayonets. There is very little rifle fire. In one of the more successful attacks they shoved down a Stokes bomb into each dug-out and did in some fifteen occupied shelters. The one prisoner taken was an elderly Saxon who had been rejected for service up to September this year. He had come up to the top for hygienic reasons and the first thing he saw was a bare-legged Highlander with a bomb. I had a long talk with him. He was a very nice fellow ; poor devil, he was glad to be out of it with a slight scalp wound.

My German is returning to me by leaps and bounds. When I first got here I was extremely rusty, but now both understand and talk it as well as I did in the school-room. It is a great comfort to me, and makes me useful, I hope, to a good many who have never learned the language.

The second raid was a moderate success. Slight error in timing and bad staff work. It is a never-failing source of wonder how many errors can be made in an apparently simple military manœuvre, the general principles of which are always the same, and most of the details of which vary by fixed laws. There is no doubt the grosser errors are avoided by experience, but even some of those are still made by subordinate commanders who have been out some time.

I find Archie Cameron, one of the subalterns in my Brigade, commanding a company apparently not less efficiently than very many older men."

The next letter contains what may be called a "mixed bag"—German morale, religion, politics, and comforts for his own men at home and in France.

" 10th January, 1917.

I got an old and very pessimistic letter of yours via Scouts Bag. It was addressed all right. I cannot make out how it got lost.

Everyone here is very cheerful. The morale of the German is certainly much lower than ours, and everyone is clear that he can do nothing serious against us on this side ; while when good weather comes we shall be able to do much more than last year. The rumour yesterday is of a good French success. We shall read of it in the English papers to-day. Up in the forward lines *Comic Cuts*, as they call the Intelligence Summary, doesn't arrive with any regularity.

I went to Confession and Mass and Communion to-day, and prayed for you all. The children seem very happy. Please give them the enclosed letter.

What are the Asquiths going to do ? I suppose a cold cannot go on for ever. Is Henry<sup>1</sup> going into active opposition or will he stay out ? Whatever he does will be well done. He has, however, a past-master of mob tactics in Lloyd George, and a slippery eel to deal with ; and what about Winston ?

We have nothing but mist here. It is difficult to get much spying. Time is being used for settling the men in, and getting observation posts made. Next Saturday I shall go over to the 6th Corps. Please buy a gramophone and some records, also some ' shilling shockers ' and books, and send them to Lieutenant Whammond, Lovat Scouts, c/o Intelligence H.Q., 1st Corps. Will you do the same for here and address them to Sergeant Macpherson, Lovat Scouts, c/o Intelligence H.Q., 3rd Corps. Will you also send the three lots of Scouts, twenty-two men each, at 1st, 3rd and 6th Corps, Christmas parcels, also send £25 to the Cameron's Bazaar in Inverness on 20th."

Extracts from two letters of January 15th, again deal with the morale of the enemy, which Lovat early realised was the real criterion by which to judge the chances of victory. His prediction regarding the use of new defensive methods and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Asquith.



ever more machine-guns by the Germans was borne out to the letter.

“ G.H.Q.

*15th January, 1917.*

There is no news here. Prisoners keep coming in, some deserters, others captured by patrols, not too reluctantly I expect. The morale of the Germans is on the wane, but they have full depots in the rear and are putting in a terrible amount of work in front. Their industry is terrible and their methods of getting work done seem better than ours. I think our men ‘ come again ’ quicker, once out of the line and clean and comfortable ; after a week they are fit and well and ready for anything. Of course some of the lots who were in the October and November mud-fighting cannot pick up as quick, but even in their case I have seen a wonderful difference in a month. We have big handicaps but big life—personally I hold very strongly that the next year will see a new development in German fighting in the Western dug-outs, and machine-guns are going to count for even more than last year. I wonder if we shall foresee for once, or only learn by costly experience and partial failure.

My German continues to improve, and I am talking with confidence and have added much to my military vocabulary.”

“ C.H.Q. III CORPS.

*15th January, 1917.*

Am back here with the 3rd Corps pending a decision where the next lot of Scouts will go to. The weather still holds up wonderfully by day, rainy wet nights which must be terrible in the trenches, but during most days, though cold, it is bearable if one is on the move. I am going down to see Hugh Baillie<sup>1</sup> at 15th Division H.Q. There is a thick mist, and no observation possible.

It is wonderful what progress in roads, railways and light railways is made in a fortnight. The only things that continue damnable are the first-line trenches. You have no idea of the waste of desolation of the forward area—eight square

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Baillie.

miles with woods shot away, and villages unnoticeable except for a few rafters sticking out of heaps of rubble. It was some of the best land in France, and is now pock-marked literally every yard with shell-holes, some large, some small, most of them with a pool of water at the bottom, and with the lips of the crater puddled round with human tracks threading through this slough of despond. Mile after mile of this ground stretches around ; hardly anything alive, nothing growing, occasionally a mud-covered man going or coming to the trenches, and an occasional shell ploughing up another bit of pulverised earth. It will be one of the sights to see at the end of the War. If all is well, we will come together through this with Shimi<sup>1</sup> and ruminate on the future of mankind.

The Germans still surrender in dribblets, one or two coming in most nights. If we could arrange some method of any numbers getting over 'No man's Land' I believe we would get many more. I have seen and spoken to a great many of them.

The captured are determined fellows who still believe they can make a draw of it. The real surrenderers are very piteous, and will tell any story that pleases."

He was not well when these letters were written and soon after he was in the grip of something very like his old enemy. He writes from hospital more concerned about the bereavement of a neighbouring family and, as usual, calls upon his wife to help :

" IN HOSPITAL,

*February 10th, 1917.*

You must not worry about me. I have been not too well for some weeks past, but only collapsed three or four days ago. The Doctor here, who seems clever, does not consider that it is dysentery, but I am having a near shave for jaundice. I hope that I may escape it and will be out, all being well, in a very few days. Please do not worry. I could not be in better hands.

<sup>1</sup> His eldest son.

I am very distressed at the case of a young officer here who has just died. His mother is Mrs. — the Grieve's wife from — Dingwall. She came out, but only in time, poor soul, to see her boy die. He was the eldest of a large family. The father who is Grieve at the farm may be called up at any time. Please take steps *immediately* to see what can be done for this family. I know you will go over at once, and rely on you to do all that can be done. If it is a question of expense, as you know, I will be responsible for anything which can assist them in these terrible days."

Good nursing in a healthy climate soon restored Lovat to health, but his command was coming to an end. Sir Douglas Haig had wanted to get the Scouts back from Salonika, as a battalion, to do observers' and snipers' work with the various corps in France under Lovat's command. General Milne was reluctant to let them go and they remained until 1918 pent up in what has been not inaptly described as the largest concentration camp of the War. In 1916 and 1917 nine groups of "Sharpshooters" were trained in all and attached to Intelligence of as many Army Corps in France; and one of the nine groups went with the XIV Corps to Italy. When the Lovat Scouts came back from Salonika in 1918, more groups were formed, and there were thirteen of them shown in the "Order of Battle" in France at the end of the War. The valuable work done by these observers is attested by letters of appreciation from the Commander-in-Chief in Italy and by the Corps Commanders and Corps Intelligence Officers in France, as well as by the fact that one in six of the personnel received some military award. Though not of great importance, this command suited Lovat well. The whole training was his own idea and he knew he was a master of it. The men were from his own countryside, and chosen by himself personally or by such as Colonel William Macdonald or Major Ewen Grant whom he trusted as himself. As a final attraction, the scattered nature of his command made him, as we have seen from his letters, free of the whole front and enabled him to see and hear all that was going on. Trusted by, and knowing intimately, most of those in high command, he was welcome wherever he went

1915-1916]

## LORD LOVAT

and his judgment sought on many military problems. If he ever hoped that he would have an opportunity of putting what he had learned into practice, he never gave a sign of it nor of any disappointment when duty called him to a task much less suited to his inclination.

## CHAPTER X

EMPLOYMENT OF GERMAN PRISONERS IN TIMBER CAMPS IN SCOTLAND.  
DIRECTOR OF FORESTS IN FRANCE. WORK OF THE DIRECTORATE.  
WINDING UP THE BUSINESS OF THE DIRECTORATE AT THE END  
OF THE WAR.

1917-1918

THE difficulty of obtaining sufficient timber for the armies in France had been continually growing and, by the beginning of 1917, had become acute. Military duties had kept Lovat away from the work of the Committee on Forestry in Scotland and he first came into touch with it again at the end of 1915, by which time progress had been made in the organization of supplies from Scotland. Woods had to be bought there and Lovat was one of the first to whom application was made. Agreement as to the price was, naturally, reached at once and everything went smoothly until it came to securing labour to cut the trees. There was none to be had in the Highlands, and Lovat was the first man to press for the employment of German labour for this kind of work. One would have thought the solution fairly obvious, but it would not have been adopted had he not happened to be at home in 1916. For it required all his drive and personal influence, exercised in numberless interviews at the War Office and elsewhere, to put it through and to establish near Beaulieu the first camp of German prisoners in Scotland. Even then his difficulties were not over; for the odious newspaper campaign against "coddling" prisoners of war so intimidated those in authority that it was only at the expense of further personal efforts that he succeeded in securing for the prisoners a diet on which it was possible to do a hard day's work. For a period he provided extra rations at his own expense.

During 1916 it was found that the supplies of timber from Scotland must be supplemented from sources requiring no shipping space and arrangements were made with the French Government to buy some forests in France. Forests were secured in the Jura and in Northern and Eastern France, and some Canadian lumberers had been transferred to France to exploit them. Their numbers were insufficient, and, by the beginning of 1917, it had become clear that only a radical reorganization of the whole business would meet requirements. Lord Derby was Secretary of State for War and looked anxiously round for someone to take on a task of immense difficulty and complexity. He knew Lovat intimately and got into touch with him early in 1917. So long as there was a chance of the Scouts coming back from Salonika, Lovat was not free to accept; and Lord Derby quite realized that, in any case, he was asking Lovat to sacrifice the military career upon which his heart was set. This is clear from his letter :

“ THE WAR OFFICE,

*14th February, 1917.*

MY DEAR SIMON,

Thanks very much for your letter. Candidly I wish the answer from France had not been what it is, because then I might have secured your services for my Forestry Department, and I honestly believe you would have been pulling your weight more there, than you are in your present position.

I am at my wits' ends for a good man, and you would have completely filled the bill. Matters are a little hung up for the moment, but do not be angry with me if I return to the charge within a week or so. Meanwhile the best of luck to you.

Yours ever,

DERBY.”

But Lord Derby knew his man and, when the offer was made, Lovat accepted it as an order to be obeyed without even enquiring what army rank was to be attached to it.

In his letter to his wife announcing his new appointment his only regret is that he is leaving his men.

“ G.H.Q., 26th February, 1917.

I was sent for to the above and have been told I am to become Director of Forestry out here. I shall have a very interesting time, and I am not sure it is not all for the best. I am up to my eyes in work for a few days, so do not expect to hear from me. Will you send out by the first opportunity red tabs off my clothes, also my staff hat and another coat with General's badges. I do not know whether I retain Major General's rank or not. The billet is a Brigadier General's one. I have had a very interesting time here while the move was on in the Somme. It is a great wrench leaving my men, but one must only do what is most useful to the country and I cannot consider my own feelings. I may be over in London for a couple of days about the 10th of March. I have not settled where I shall have my Headquarters ; probably in this district.”

On his appointment as Director of Forestry, Lovat established his headquarters at Le Touquet on April 2nd, 1917. His Directorate involved control of all the Forestry operations in France. There were complaints from the Army about the difficulties experienced from want of timber and the organisation under the Royal Engineers was incapable of meeting the demands. This organisation was scrapped ; and Lovat began with only a small contingent of regular troops and eleven companies of Canadian lumbermen who had been working under the Convention of the previous year with the French. As is so often the case, the material obstacles to success, though formidable enough, paled before the difficulties offered by the infinite variety of the human temperament. In the first place the Canadians, who had expressly reserved and always enjoyed independence of action, objected naturally enough to taking orders from any British General ; yet somehow or other the indispensable Canadian energy and skill had to be induced to conform to the general plan. Then there were the French who owned the forests

and the soil itself; and a confirmed Franco-phil may be permitted to observe that light-hearted indifference to the pecuniary aspect of a transaction is not a leading characteristic either of French Authorities or of individual Frenchmen. The arrival of the Americans, so welcome to those in the fighting line, added a fresh complication to be solved by the harassed distributors of timber supplies. Nor were the personal idiosyncrasies of British and other Generals always calculated to render their task easier. In short, Lovat was taking on a gigantic industrial undertaking in circumstances which demanded not only great power of organisation and administration but the exercise of diplomacy of a high order.

Many men would have begun by trying to define and regularise the position of the Canadians without whose hearty co-operation nothing could be effected. Such an attitude would probably have compromised the enterprise from the start. Always indifferent to forms and ready to make any arrangement, however anomalous on paper, work in practice, Lovat insisted upon the officers from the Dominions joining his Headquarters staff at Le Touquet where his personality was the prevailing influence. One who often visited him there on business writes :

"He kept a tight rein upon the officers of all ranks, and at the same time, was keen and understanding, and as the months passed he gained the respect and affection of everyone. At mess he was the ruling personality and all talk of the 'job' in hand was barred. The evenings afterwards, when free from duty, which was not often, were delightful; and he joined in the games with ever a watchful eye upon the peculiarities or inclinations of each individual. After bedtime he must have spent many hours working out his problems; and by his bedside there were always John Nisbet's two volumes of *Forestry*, the most comprehensive book on the subject ever published."

The object of the Directorate was to make the British Army in France self-supporting in timber; and at the end of five months this object was accomplished except for some 10,000 tons which were unprocurable in France. During those five months 750,000 tons of wood had been provided for the Army; and in the month of September, 1917, by which



time the French Army had to be provided, 163,000 tons were cut for the Armies. At this period the operations extended over :

- (a) British Army areas,
- (b) French Army areas.
- (c) Lines of communication.
- (d) Central France.
- (e) Gironde and Les Landes.
- (f) Jura and Vosges.

The British organization in September consisted of eleven Forestry Companies :

	<i>Men</i>
Strength	1,210
With unskilled labour, prisoners of war, Chinese, Indians, Egyptians and British	15,900

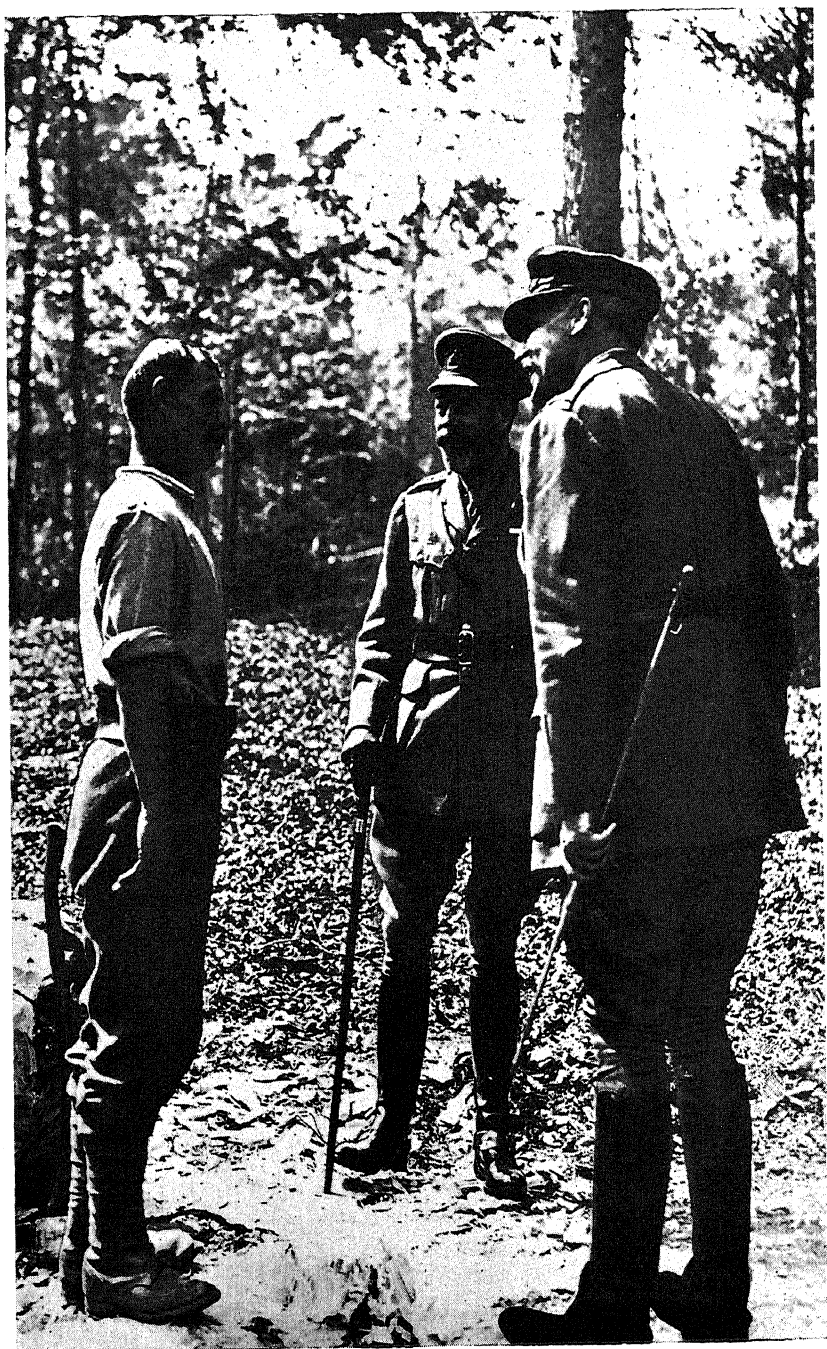
By this time the Canadian Forestry Corps had increased to fifty-six Companies with :

Strength	10,100
With unskilled labour	3,400
	<hr/> 30,610 <hr/>

On transport there were :

Men	2,700
Horses	5,510
Vehicles (horse)	2,000
„ (mechanical)	700

In the early spring the King visited the Directorate and the photograph on the opposite page shows His Majesty and Lovat enjoying a joke at the latter's expense. Lovat had been boasting of the skill of the Canadians and after lunch the King expressed a wish to see them fell a big tree. The tree crashed down successfully in the right direction ; but, on talking to the woodmen afterwards, it was discovered that the men who had felled it were not Canadians at all, but came from the royal County of Norfolk.



*His Majesty, Lovat, and a forester*



During all his preoccupation and hard work, Lovat never forgot his home-life ; and one letter to his wife amongst many written on this subject during his time in France is worth giving.

“ FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*May 19th, 1917.*

One line to hope you got safely to Beaufort and that the house is not too cold or the journey too exhausting. I cannot bear to think of that endless journey with no one looking after you. I am so glad the babies are happy to get home. It would be too terrible if they cared for any place half as much as their home. I have written to Miss Baba<sup>1</sup> to-day so that she may not be jealous of Shimi. I have written to him to-day asking various questions about the farm and the rabbits. I do hope he will love Beaufort. I cannot bear to think he would like any place equally well. How I should like to be with you and the babies to see it all again. I long and long to be home with you three.”

Another letter gives some idea of the variety of activities which his post demanded and of his interest in matters outside it. Mr. Sutherland’s<sup>2</sup> appointment to the Inter-allied Board at Paris was of the greatest assistance to Lovat.

“ FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*May 28th, 1917.*

I never had a moment free to write you from Paris as I was so busy there. We went via Rouen. I spent a day in the Forest of Lyons, then on to the Canadians and arrived in Paris for tea. I dined with Balfour and we talked finance and forests afterwards with the Financial Adviser. Next day we had meetings of committee nine to ten, ten to twelve-thirty, three to five, six to eight and again after dinner.

<sup>1</sup> His eldest daughter, now the Countess of Eldon.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir John Sutherland.

Bee Herbert and Reggie<sup>1</sup> dined with me, also Winston<sup>2</sup> who was in great form. We talked till very late and then Winston and I walked round the Square. He was most interesting and remains a wonderful optimist, though all too conscious of the immense difficulties yet before us. Paris is full of all sorts of rumours, reports of Ribot giving the peace wanted by Austria and Bulgaria. Italy determined to push her offensive. American divisions to be over soon, etc., etc. Certainly Paris never stops talking. We motored back through Compiègne and Amiens. Lochiel<sup>3</sup> arrived here to-day. He takes up my Scout work. I am glad to say that Sutherland of the Board of Agriculture comes over to-morrow to go to Paris."

The Sudan Plantations Syndicate, mentioned earlier, was never long out of Lovat's mind and he seems to have had some special points to settle at this time.

*To his wife.*

"FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*May 29th, 1917.*

Do not lose a day of this fine weather at home. Sit out in it as long as you can and come back to me at Calais with your face as brown as a pansy. I am so glad that the painting of the big room has been successful. It sounds lovely. The colour is much needed. I long to see it. How are the potatoes?

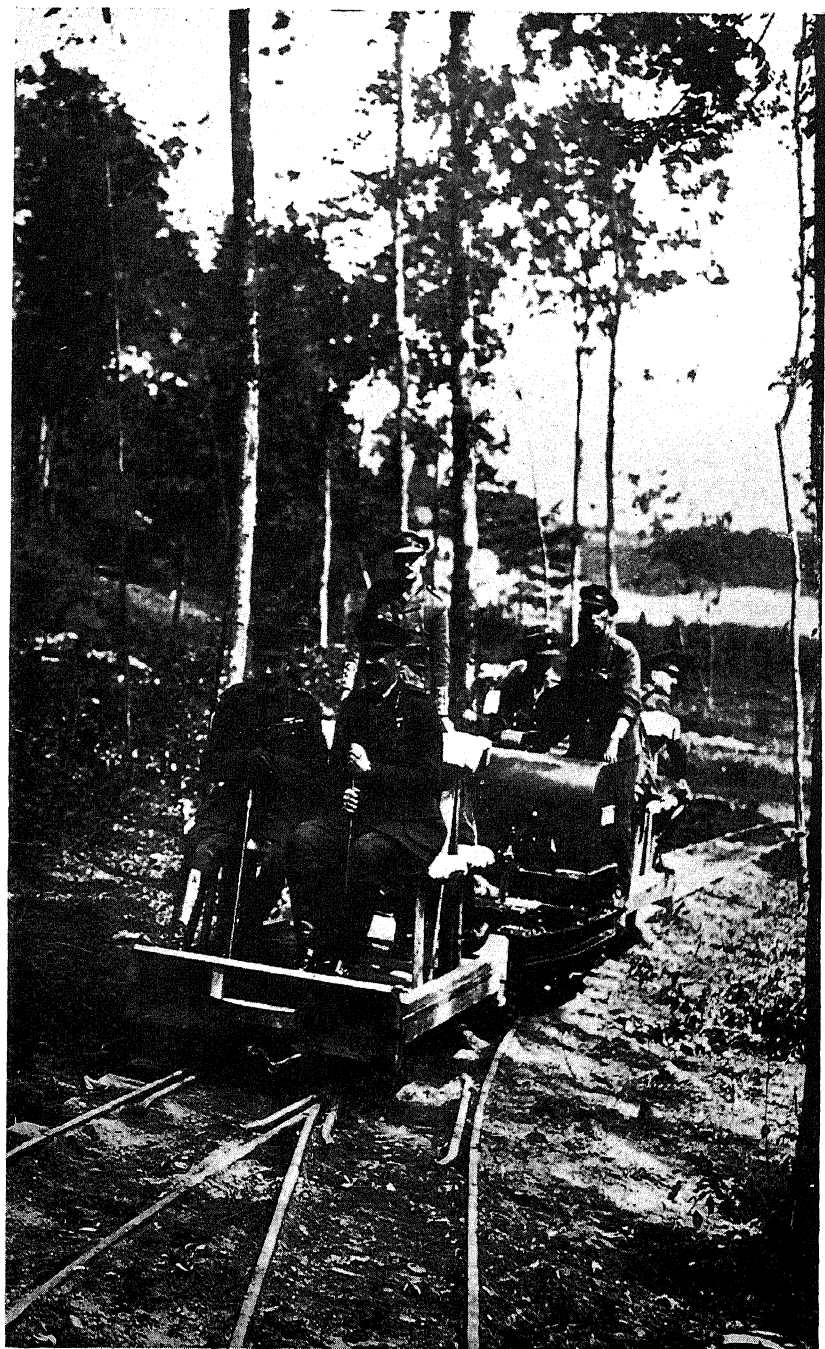
My plans are still rather wobbly from day to day. I am very anxious, as you know, to see the Egyptian Officials over the Sudan, but do not know yet the date of their arrival. Damn this war, I am sick to death of it!"

By June the organization was getting into its stride and Lovat, in a visit to London, had finished with the Forestry

<sup>1</sup> The Earl and Countess of Pembroke.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Winston Churchill.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel D. Cameron of Lochiel.



*His Majesty with Lovat in a French forest*



Report. He was still working spasmodically on the Housing Commission, the Report of which we have seen was published in September of this year. These subjects and that of his wife's health and movements fill an interesting letter.

“FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*June 10th, 1917.*

I have just got back from a three days tour down Rouen way. We are getting ahead with production, and the forests are getting really well organized and production pulling ahead at a good pace. I had a very hectic day and a half in London. I think I got a good many things settled, anyway I got quit of the Forestry Report which is one good thing off my mind, and when we have settled up the Housing Commission at the end of this month it will be a further relief. I shall try and get down to see you at Boulogne and I will if possible arrange to put in a visit on my way up and down from the Armies and then we shall join in Paris about the 28th. After this month my time is not so valuable. I feel very strongly with you that after September you must leave France. You are not strong enough for the work and look so desperately frail and thin. I think you have done all that can be done for — and feel with you that there is a great deal you must now take over at home. So many things should be done on the East and West Coast for crofters who have lost relatives or are in distress through this wicked war and who will all need you in one way or another. I am glad to hear the rain has come and that the crops look well. Hay will be all important to us, and good rain now will mean a crop I trust.”

Negotiations with the French were never free from difficulties and were a source of irritation to Lovat as well as of much quiet amusement, which appeared more in his conversation than in his letters. His first acquaintance with the American High Command offered plenty of it.



" FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*July 19th, 1917.*

I think things go a little better with the French over forestry. I am not going to Paris this week, and hope to get a good deal settled on 27th ; then three days later I shall be on my way to Scotland. No news here. The French did well at Verdun and appear a lot bucked up. I saw Pershing yesterday. All the directors at G.H.Q. were introduced to him ; a fairly good man I thought, but too old. He seemed beat already by the magnitude of the task before him. They will need a lot of scrapping before they get the necessary picked higher command. The only other gentleman who made an impression at G.H.Q. was a Western Senator (a General) and the impression he made was on the floor. At every exhortation the Q.M.G. blanched with horror. To-day a notice has been put up in every passage : ' No spitting on the stairs.' A circular is expected on spittoons and who is entitled to draw them."

The slogan that expense must never stand in the way of anything wanted for the prosecution of the War was exploited by many naval and military men, and indeed by a number of prominent politicians, to justify and excuse a waste of public money which in the aggregate ran into many hundreds of millions. It is so much less trouble to pay anything that is asked than to work out costs properly and insist on paying only for value received ; and it shows such a fine patriotic spirit to answer outraged critics of culpable laziness with the withering question whether they know a war is on. Slogans did not appeal to Lovat and one of the most remarkable achievements of his Directorate was the successful vigilance he exercised over the financial side. The Quartermaster-General must have been as astonished at this eccentricity as he was pleased with its results.

" FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*17 August, 1917.*

I saw the Q.M.G. yesterday, who appeared very pleased with our work and said we were the most economical

people he had to deal with, also the most regular in deliveries. As this used to be the most uncertain department in the whole army, it was satisfactory. The Canadians had a good 'push' at Hill 70 to-day. It will be a difficult place to hold, but if they can hang on by their eyelashes till the counter-attacks are over Lens should go.

I heard moderate news of the Russians in London, but had little time to talk or even listen."

Lovat himself was satisfied with the work being done in the forests, and a letter to his wife goes far to explain the secret of his success with those working for him—success not due to that overworked quality known vaguely as "charm," but to his regard for the feelings of others and his remarkable insight into the personal characteristics of each individual.

"FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,  
*August 22nd, 1917.*

An inspection of our work has taken place by the Q.M.G. and other Directors. We went all round the woods and I think they were very satisfied with what they saw, and well they may be, because very good work has been done in the various forests they visited.

I want you to be kind to a young Canadian called — who comes from Strathglass. He will be over about 4th September. I want him to stay at Beaufort, and for you to arrange to send him up to Strathglass to see the country his people came from. Also send him out for a day or two's shooting with MacLean.<sup>1</sup> He is a very nice fellow, but will be very shy. He has done excellent work for me on railways and constructions, and I would like you to be helpful to him. He may stay 10 or 14 days.

There is not much news here. People appear to think the War will be over by November, the last reason in Paris being that Wilson has taken thought to himself and proposes to offer to pay Germany's indemnity for the destruction in Belgium and France, as this will be less expensive to America than a European war."

<sup>1</sup> John MacLean, for thirty years Head Keeper at Beaufort.

Lovat left all internal decorations at Beaufort in the hands of his wife knowing that, in this particular business, they were far more capable than his own. Something seems to have gone awry and a letter, after dealing with the mistake in summary fashion, shows how much Lovat enjoyed some aspects of his work.

“FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*August 29th, 1917.*

Do not worry a damn about the paint. If it is the wrong colour it can come off; every time it is scraped off it will lessen the red in the wood, and that is at all events so much gained. You overworry yourself about trifles. Shimi must have been in great excitement over his fish. How I wish I had been there. He is very excitable, poor little chap. He will grow out of it as he gets older. I think you are always admirable with the babies, so good that one forgets to say how good you are, which is the highest praise.

Did I tell you what a wonderful time we had in the Landes. It is a most lovely country, great tracts of firs slightly disfigured by the resin tapping, but in great masses mixed with rivers, villages, clearings and lovely red-appled orchards. I have never seen a more peaceful prosperous country, and one can hardly imagine that a war is raging in France. There are no men, however, to be seen and most of the fast-running cars are driven by the even faster Spanish ladies. The food in the restaurants is wonderful, white bread, and ten and twelve course meals. We spent three amusing days, bought several forests, arranged for docks and train facilities and visited four sawmills, producing some two thousand tons apiece per month. We did business with several ladies whose woods and lands have suddenly become extremely valuable. One lady (she was only one remove from a peasant) had four hundred thousand trees in all (worth at least £2 apiece) growing on her estate. She did all her business from her two-roomed cottage, and measured each tree herself before she would sell.”

All this time the Paschendaele attack was being inexorably pushed and Lovat was no better informed than others as to

its total results. An isolated success assumed exaggerated form and raised undue hopes. A letter illustrates this and then deals with his own timber affairs. He had, unfortunately, sold a wood of nearly three thousand acres, much damaged by squirrels, just before the War, and the contractors had reaped the benefit of rising prices. Now his opportunity came. Those who knew Lovat will be amused at his solemn musings over the suitability of a match for one of his lady friends, a relative. He evidently recognized his undoubted limitations in this sphere.

" FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,  
*September 23rd, 1917.*

Everyone is very pleased with the 'push.' Apparently a great many Germans were killed. Many good judges say the most killed in any bit of ground since the first battle of Ypres. The story is that we did not go as far as the Germans expected although we got all our objectives ; in consequence the German counter-attacks started from too far back, deployed too early and lost their momentum before they got near our trenches. The light was excellent and the co-operation between artillery and airmen all that could be desired. I saw several hospital trains go South, most of them half empty. I hear our casualties are light. I can hear nothing more about Tom Bridges<sup>1</sup> except that he was hit in the leg. I have been to the hospitals near here, but can hear nothing of him.

I am just off to the Canadian Central Corps, then Paris, and a trip to the Jura and Vosges for a week. I will have no time to write.

I am sending Colonel Donnelly, who is head of the Canadians out here, to have a rest at Beaufort and want him to fish and shoot a stag.

Garrioch's deal over pit-prop timber seems a record. You and he must make further efforts. He deserves the highest praise. The price is 300 per cent above pre-War

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir T. Bridges.

prices, and it is up to you and him to get away as much timber as can be taken.

I saw Gerald Maxwell<sup>1</sup> looking very well with his Military Cross. He has got thirteen planes down, and hopes to get home next month.

I shall go to see — when in Paris and report to you. All I have seen of him I like, but we must be very wise and not hurried in our judgment. I do not know whether you or I are very good judges. No one is a judge except the person principally concerned, but I am not quite sure whether we are even up to the ordinary standard of advisers, for you are a matchmaker by habit and always wish for the immediate happiness of those you love ; and I am rather careless by nature of general character, provided I see the special qualification I want or like in an individual. And we are both perhaps lacking in the conventional point of view which, though so tiresome, is sometimes a safe guide in such questions.”

It would have been worth seeing the contest between Lovat and the redoubtable Duchesse d’Uzès over her forests, but the issue was probably never in doubt. The “*Ordre du Mérite Agricole*” in France has for some reason a comic flavour which it shares in the public estimation with another French institution, “*Les Pompiers*.” There is something in successful agriculturists and brass-helmeted firemen which appeals to the sense of humour of the French. They must have enjoyed the ceremony of decoration as much as Lovat himself.

“FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

*October 3rd, 1917.*

I am now engaged in a spirited contest with the Duchesse d’Uzès for her woods. She is a most uncompromising lady and very assertive of her rights over her enormous forests, but I think we shall yet make friends.

I go off to-morrow to get a medal from the Minister of Agriculture. Let me hear as to your plans. When you and

<sup>1</sup> Lovat’s nephew, Major Gerald Maxwell, who was later in Ball’s famous squadron.

the babies go South do not go near London in full moon time. These air raids have been frightful. The babies would have to spend their time in the underground, and I am so afraid that you would spend it on the roof. I also believe that servants are not to be had, although I have no doubt that yours would gladly go South with you.

Things are going well at the front, everyone most optimistic. They are shouting for more wood for roads, although I gave them twice as much as promised. Now that the wet weather has set in they will want more and more, and their calculations were very much under their needs ; however, I can do it."

" FORESTRY DIRECTORATE,

October 7th, 1917.

I was yesterday presented with great pomp and ceremony with the Distinguished Order of the 'Ordre du Mérite Agricole.' The Minister presented the Quarter Master General,<sup>1</sup> Rawly's<sup>2</sup> Quartermaster and myself with the highest grade, and some forty other officers were presented with the second and third grade. Two hundred *poilus* were drawn up and presented arms, forty-three British Officers advanced sheepishly and hesitatingly over the rough cobblestoned street, duly had the medals pinned on their breasts, and equally sheepishly withdrew, while the band played the Marseillaise and other inspiring tunes. The affair took place in Arras, rather a fine setting for the piece, battered houses, wrecked trees, guns steadily booming just outside the Square. Gavin Hamilton<sup>3</sup> was down officially with Rawly's Q. Officer ; Charlie Trotter<sup>4</sup> is Commandant and nearly had to make a speech. We had a large champagne lunch afterwards, and toasted our awards with more champagne. After the feast, Gavin and I got hold of the Chief Staff Officer of the 1st Army and went over, step by step, the Vimy fight. Very interesting.

<sup>1</sup> General Sir John Cowans.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir Henry Rawlinson's Q.M.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.

<sup>4</sup> Colonel Charles Trotter.

Bitterly cold, but a fine view of the old fight and the new battle round Lens."

On March 30th, 1918, Lovat was presented with the Légion d'Honneur by M. Poincaré ; but no account of the ceremony is to be found.

Perhaps this is as good place as another to put in an extract from the *Grey Wave* containing a picturesque account by Major A. Hamilton Gibbs of his personal experience in dealing with Lovat in an emergency.

Page 185.

"The work provided one with a certain amount of comic relief. Timber ran short and it seemed as if the standings would be denied completion. Stones, gravel and cinders had been already a difficulty, settled only by much importuning. Bricks had been brought from the gun line. But asking for timber was like trying to steal the chair from under the General. I went to Division and was promptly referred to Corps, who were handling the job. Corps said : ' You've had all that's allowed in the R.E. handbook. Good morning.' I explained that I wanted it for wind screens. They smiled politely and suggested my getting some ladies' fans from any deserted village. On returning to Division they said : ' If Corps can't help you, how the devil can you expect us to ? '

I went to Army. They looked me over and asked me where I came from and who I was, and what I was doing, and what for and on what authority, and why I came to them instead of going to Division and Corps ? To all of which I replied patiently. Their ultimate answer was a smile of regret. There wasn't any in the country, they said.

So I prevailed upon my brother who, as War Correspondent, ran a big car and no questions asked about petrol, to come over and lunch with me. To him I put the case and was immediately whisked off to *O.C. Forests, the Timber King*. At the lift of his little finger down came thousands of great oaks. Surely a few branches were going begging ?

He heard my story with interest. His answer threw beams of light. ' Why the devil don't Division and Corps and all the rest of them ask for it if they want it ? I've got tons of stuff here. How much do you want ? '

I told him the cubic stature of the standings.

He jotted abstruse calculations for a moment. 'Twenty tons' said he. 'Are you anywhere near the river?' The river flowed at the bottom of the lines.

'Right. I'll send you a barge. To-day's Monday. Should be with you by Wednesday. Name? Unit?'

He ought to have been commanding an army, that man.

We lunched most triumphantly in Hazebrouck, had tea and dinner at Cassel and I was dropped on my own doorstep well before midnight.

It was not displeasing to let drop, quite casually of course, to Division and Corps and Army, that twenty tons of timber were being delivered at my lines in three days and that there was more where that came from. If they wanted any, they had only to come and ask ME about it."

Lovat's health never really recovered from the dysentery contracted in Gallipoli. We have seen how he was in hospital at the beginning of the year and, all through 1917, he was overtaxing his strength. By the end of the year his staff were seriously anxious; and Colonel Allhusen who had rejoined it and was looking after the personnel of his heterogeneous "Army" of 30,000 men consulted Sir T. Parkinson, the specialist, who had been in charge of Lovat. His considered opinion was not reassuring and the use Colonel Allhusen made of it shows how well a general may be served in spite of himself.

" 25th December, 1917.

DEAR SIR,

I am glad you are keeping an eye on Lord Lovat. He is a delicate man in many respects but strong in others. The main cause of trouble is the heart and circulation. Briefly he requires to lead a perfectly regular life in connection with food, exercise, rest and proper warm garments. Meals at regular hours and rest for at least half an hour after each meal.

Regular exercise *daily*—not spasmodically. Each day he should have at least two hours walking exercise—golf if such a luxury can be obtained.



LORD LOVAT

[1917-1918

Prolonged fatigue especially with irregular meals is very bad indeed.

He should wear very warm clothes—not too heavy otherwise they cause fatigue.

A certain amount of alcohol will do him good if taken at meals. If he leads a regular and well ordered life as regards meals, rest and exercise he can be kept well. Long sitting in stuffy rooms or offices is a bad thing.

Yours sincerely,

T. W. PARKINSON."

*" 29th December, 1917.*

DEAR SIR,

I am extremely obliged for your letter of December 25th about Lord Lovat.

I am showing it to his Staff, and it will strengthen our hands very much in taking care of him in spite of himself.

Yours sincerely,

F. ALLHUSEN.

Memorandum—F. Allhusen to :

Colonel Thompson,  
Colonel White,  
Colonel Oldham,

Colonel Sutherland,  
Lieut.-Colonel Leslie,  
Lieut.-Colonel Donnelly,  
Lieut.-Colonel Mallinson.

*29th December, 1917.*

The enclosed copy of a letter from Sir T. Parkinson, the Specialist whom the General consulted when in London after his recent illness, makes the position with regard to his health perfectly clear. Unless he takes a pull and leads a careful life, he seems fairly certain to break down again, whilst if he follows the doctor's instructions there is no reason why he should not keep perfectly well.

As you know, he never spares himself, dislikes behaving like a delicate man, and detests being treated as one ; but it is now the personal responsibility of us all, at Headquarters

and elsewhere, to make it easy for him to carry out the doctor's orders, and personally I think we should go to the extent of putting obstacles—well camouflaged—in the way of his doing the things that we are clearly told are bad for him.

At Headquarters we ought to be able to manage pretty well, and the most difficult task will fall on those whom he visits and those who accompany him on his tours.

After this letter has gone beyond recall, I shall show the General Sir T. Parkinson's letter, tell him that I have circulated it, and beg him to help us in our duty of taking care of him in spite of himself."

The year 1918 began none too brightly. In fact, the only bright spot was the growing strength of the Americans ; and it was not anywhere anticipated that the War would be over before the year was out. Lovat, too, was anxious about the future at home as it affected his heavily encumbered property. His wife, who had just had a baby, wished to buy a house in London and he utters a word of warning.

" FRANCE,

*February 2nd, 1918.*

I would give everything to do what you want over buying a house, but I am sure it is wise now when everything is so doubtful in the future not to saddle ourselves with anything which is not a bargain. Given the end of the War and reasonable legislation, I would be much more ready to give £1,000 beyond what I promised you to spend on a house. Believe me I am very anxious about what may happen after the War. You may think I am over anxious but I do not think so. As a class I can see none so vulnerable as the Highland landlord, that is why I started at once to cut timber and also why I am trying to sell land. I do not take too pessimistic a view of the long distance future. Things will right themselves with time ; but there is bound to be a period of very great anxiety when many will go down and first of all those with heavy commitments who cannot meet their obligations.

I hope you are seeing about having the Baby<sup>1</sup> baptized as soon as possible. Please do not delay this a minute longer. I know it is difficult for you to make arrangements and curse myself for not being able to get over to do it all for you, but I see no prospect of leave for the moment and done it has got to be. I know you will arrange for it immediately. This delay is worrying me and I hate to think of you so weak and ill with all this to be done."

The air was thick with rumours, and the tension between the Government and the soldiers notorious. Lovat does not seem to think there is much to choose between them and is more concerned with the risk of air-raids on London.

"FRANCE,

*February 21st, 1918.*

I have been up to G.H.Q. to-day—full of rumours as always, amongst them one that Henry Wilson is trying to cuckoo Harry Rawlinson out of his nest. Well, it is a curious life to be an 'arrivist'; one must have a thick hide and a specially constituted mind. No one knows anything about the machinations of Lloyd George. It is strange how completely ignorant the Army are of all political moves. I shall go and see Henry Wilson when I am in Paris if he is still there! Personally I can hardly believe a change with Robertson will take place. It does not seem to fit in with anything. What a dirty trade politics is! I would far sooner saw wood out here than be involved in them.

I looked out several times last night in the hope that there would be wind or storms. I fear the glass is high, however, and that aircraft may be over you. I know you have no nerves about this, but do be wise and tell Diana<sup>2</sup> to have a stretcher ready in case you have to be carried downstairs. It is everything to know you could get out of the house if it were hit. Personally I do not think there is any danger, but it would relieve my mind if I felt you could get away if required."

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Hugh Charles Patrick Fraser.

<sup>2</sup> Her sister, now the Countess of Westmorland, with whom she was staying.

Two further letters deal with the military situation and give the reasons for which it was incumbent on the Germans to continue their attack.

“FRANCE,

*April 15th, 1918.*

You are evidently all much more depressed in England than we are here. Our men have fought magnificently in the North and the Germans' repeated attacks for the last three days for which they have practically gained nothing must have taken the sting out of many fresh Divisions. Our men must be desperately weary and we have, alas, all too few Divisions, but still we are doing our part of wearing them out; whether Foch is to reinforce us to plunge in with a coup I do not know, but we must give him credit for not carting us now when all hangs on the next ten days.”

“*April 24th, 1918.*

At last Spring seems here, exquisitely lovely to-day, but what a Spring with the War hanging on and every moment rumours and counter-rumours, of actions or expected happenings! I think that within ten days, probably sooner, the Germans are certain to be ready again and, if ready, I see no valid arguments why they should not press on their attack. They know the Yanks are coming, they know our reserves under the recent Act cannot be ready under three months. They will not be any stronger, the fighting season is short; if they fail to press their advantage now, the subject States, Russia etc. and their own internal foes will be raising their heads. A set-back now might be fatal to them and, having committed themselves, they must continue. God help our higher Command (it sadly needs inspiration). Every week is important for us in getting the Americans into the line. It is amazing to think that after a full year they are not yet there in any numbers to count. It is lucky we are in the fine weather now. We shall need it desperately in the immediate future.”

The German break-through of March, 1918, put an enormous strain on the Directorate. Lovat had foreseen the emergency before the Army Staffs and, although no "pickets" for defensive purposes were included in the latter's demands, he took steps early in January, 1918, to acquire and exploit suitable forests ; the result was that no less than 90,000 tons of pickets were actually delivered to the British Armies between March and May, 1918. This was but one incident in an undertaking, the complexity of which can best be judged from a memorandum supplied to me by the kindness of Major-General R. L. B. Thompson, who was Lovat's Chief Staff Officer.

" LORD LOVAT'S WORK AS DIRECTOR OF FORESTRY  
G.H.Q., FRANCE, 1917-1918.

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- I. Task of the Forestry Directorate and the Results achieved.
  - II. An appreciation of Lord Lovat by one of his Staff.
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I. *The Task of the Forestry Directorate and the Results achieved.*

*Results achieved.* In April, 1917, the production from French Forests for the British Army amounted to some 50,000 tons of timber per month, mainly in the form of round timber and fuelwood. Nearly the whole of the sawn timber required by the British Army had to be provided by importation.

During the month of July, 1918, approximately 300,000 tons of timber were produced in French forests and half of this was sawn timber.

During the 20 months, April, 1917, to November, 1918, 3,000,000 tons of timber were delivered to the British, French and American Armies and a substantial reserve of 700,000 tons built up which would have been adequate to meet all contingencies of the military situation. During this period, over 1,000,000 tons of sawn timber, 6,000,000 road slabs and 8,000,000 railway sleepers were delivered to the British Army. From October, 1917, onwards over 90 per cent of

the British army timber requirements were provided from French forests.

*Areas exploited.* Excluding minor operations in Army areas, some 72 Main Forests were exploited of which one-third were State Forests. The operations were divided into 5 Main Groups, viz :

- (a) Army Area.
- (b) Lines of Communication Area.
- (c) Central France.
- (d) Jura and Vosges.
- (e) Les Landes.

The Canadian Forestry Corps in Groups (c), (d) and (e) were responsible for actual forestry operations, but the forests to be exploited and deliveries to the British Army therefrom were settled by the Directorate.

*Strength employed on Forestry Work.* The total strength employed on Forestry work in France at the end of the War numbered some 45,000 men, 1000 M.T. vehicles and 6000 horses with horse transport vehicles.

There were 11 R.E. Forestry Companies and 63 Companies of the Canadian Forestry Corps, the rest being Labour Companies of all descriptions.

## II. *An appreciation of Lord Lovat by one of his Staff.*

*General.* The following remarks are an endeavour by one who had the privilege of serving on Lord Lovat's Staff to show how largely the success achieved by the Directorate was due to the personality of the Director. He possessed ideal qualifications for the post—experience of business, public affairs and forestry, great military knowledge, shrewd judgment and foresight and abounding drive and energy. He was a man whose opinions were bound to be considered with respect by those in the highest positions.

*Lord Lovat's foresight in policy of forest exploitation.* There are many factors which have to be considered in opening up new forests, e.g., mill and hutment sites, water supply, methods of extraction and transportation facilities. The standing timber to be exploited is suitable for certain definite

products, e.g., standard railway sleepers cannot be produced from small trees.

Any change of policy retards production and, if it involves changes in the nature of the standing timber exploited, it cannot be given effect to until after a considerable amount of time.

Lord Lovat appreciated this problem and from the outset was able to convince the Quarter Master General and the Services using timber that he must work on an approved consolidated demand based on the best possible forecast of 6 months' requirements, allowing for all possible eventualities in the military situation, and that it would take at least 6 months before any drastic change in the demand could be complied with.

Although now this may seem an obvious course, under the conditions obtaining at General Headquarters, it was a great tribute to Lord Lovat's personality that his proposals were accepted.

The approved consolidated demand had to be within the capacity of the Directorate to execute, and involved the reconciliation of various divergent interests for which requirements in full could not be satisfied simultaneously. Although he was a firm advocate of a fixed policy he was quite prepared to meet exceptional emergencies.

Thanks to his admirable liaison with the Intelligence and personal knowledge of the situation in Army Areas, he foresaw the need for pickets for defensive measures early in January, 1918, although none were included in the consolidated demand. He took immediate steps to acquire and exploit suitable forests and no less than 90,000 tons of pickets were actually delivered to the British armies between March and May, 1918.

Another example of meeting an exceptional emergency was the supply of some thousands of tons charcoal for the front line at short notice, owing to the failure of the supply from home. The production of large amounts of charcoal with inexperienced labour produced a host of difficulties which were rapidly and successfully surmounted.

*Foresight as regards standardization of forest products.* Lord Lovat was constantly circulating throughout the armies' areas and had an intimate first hand knowledge of the

detailed needs for which timber was required. He was personally acquainted with every Chief Engineer of an Army or Corps and in close touch with the Transportation Directorate.

He foresaw from the outset the value of standardization as an essential condition of large scale production and with his knowledge and personality was able to convince the various users of timber that their requirements must be standardized if possible. As in the case of the Consolidated Demand this also involved a reconciliation of divergent interests.

The Sawing Instructions drawn up under his orders are an admirable example of standardization and will serve as a model for use in the future.

*Difficulties overcome by Lord Lovat in supplying timber from Les Landes.* One of the first actions taken on the formation of the Directorate in March, 1917, was to arrange for a drastic reduction of importation of timber from September, 1917, onwards, so as to relieve shipping.

To counterbalance this reduction it was essential, if the winter hutting needs of the Armies were to be met, that a substantial delivery of sawn softwood from France should commence in the Autumn of 1917. The only available area for a supply of softwood on this scale was Les Landes. In addition to forest acquisition and exploitation there was the vital problem to be solved of getting the timber to the Armies. It was quickly discovered that trucks could not be made available for the transportation of some 40,000 tons of timber per month from Les Landes to Northern France.

Lord Lovat learnt that ships returning to England in ballast could be made available for the transport of timber from Bordeaux and Bayonne. Mainly through his personal influence ships, dock berths in Bordeaux and Bayonne and railway facilities from the forests to these Ports were procured in time for the supply to commence in the Autumn as intended.

The difficulties of this task might well have proved insuperable for a man of lesser calibre.

*Relations with the French.* The importance of Forests as a national asset is vividly recognized by the French and most Frenchmen have a very real affection for their woods.



Forest exploitation in war may have to go faster than in peace, but due regard has to be paid to sylvicultural conditions, especially in the State Forests.

That there was great cordiality and esteem in our relations with the French Forest officers was due in a large extent to the fact that in Lord Lovat they hailed a Brother 'Forester.'

We were allowed to buy standing timber in our Army areas and the fact that this privilege was allowed was largely due to the esteem held for Lord Lovat's fair dealing by the French Military Mission.

Outside the British Army Areas standing timber was acquired by the Comité Inter-Allié des Bois de Guerre in Paris, on which the Forestry Directorate was represented. Lord Lovat attended monthly meetings of this Committee in Paris and at Paris he met various French Ministers, Officials and officers concerned with Forestry matters. He was most popular with French officials and officers and it was rarely that he did not obtain their full agreement to his proposals. He was extremely helpful to the American Forestry officers and his help was greatly appreciated by them. His cordial relations with the Americans greatly facilitated the difficult problem of allotment of Forests between the British and American Forces.

*Canadian Forestry Corps.* As the arrangements involved a dual responsibility much tact was required to avoid friction. The Canadians respected and admired Lord Lovat and most of the possible causes of friction were removed by his personality.

*Lord Lovat's relations with his Staff.* A feature of Lord Lovat's administration was a weekly meeting of his Directorate Staff at which problems were discussed, progress surveyed and policy shaped. These meetings did much to keep the Staff together and make them fully acquainted with the Director's wishes and views.

While a man of definite views and abnormal knowledge, he was quick to see the points of any new idea which might be of advantage. His Staff had no diffidence in approaching him and were always assured of a courteous and sympathetic reception.

He was a great leader of men and with him at the helm all felt from the outset that success was assured.

Although suffering from the after effects of severe dysentery contracted in Gallipoli, he was indifferent to fatigue and exposure when there was important work to be done. His Staff, knowing his value, were constantly preoccupied with the endeavour to make him spare himself. It cannot be said that the efforts in this direction were attended with marked success.

All who served with him will cherish the memory of a very human and lovable man and a very great gentleman."

The Armistice found the Directorate with vast quantities of timber on hand. It was out of the question to ship it to England on account of the expense, and the French, who really required it for reconstruction, seemed to have us at their mercy. Lovat foresaw the innumerable difficulties which would arise if the business were not immediately wound up before he left France; and he arranged a Conference with the French timber people and asked Sir John Stirling-Maxwell to see Mr. Ball, the Timber Controller in London. "Tell Ball to get hold of every Jew he can mobilize. No Christian is capable of dealing with the French," were his instructions. So a famous Jew in the timber trade, flanked by other Hebrews, confronted the French, who told him that they had no use for the timber which they wished to be removed as soon as possible. Our Jews replied that this was what they wanted to discuss. There was no intention of selling; and they had only come to make the necessary transport arrangements for shipping the timber with the least possible delay. The Conference thereupon adjourned and an agreeably good offer from the French for the whole of the timber was soon after accepted.

Lovat's work was recognized by a letter of thanks from the Army Council and it is to be hoped that he set more store by it than did the Head of the Canadians who, on receiving the thanks of the big-wigs, said to General Brady: "We don't give a damn for this official stuff; but the boys would be really pleased if Lovat would say something to them as a good-bye." Anyhow here is the official letter:

LORD LOVAT

[1917-1918

“ ARMY COUNCIL,  
26th April, 1919.

90298/10 (D.Q.H.G.).

SIR,

I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that they have received a report from Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, late Commanding-in-Chief, the British Armies in France, a letter in which he expresses his indebtedness to you for the excellent work you accomplished whilst head of the Forestry Directorate in France.

The Army Council fully recognize the formidable task you had before you when, in March, 1917, you took over the direction of the work for procuring timber for the Army. At that time, owing to the submarine menace and shipping difficulties, it was imperative that the British Armies in France should be as self-supporting as possible, whilst the demand for timber of all descriptions was on the increase. Your negotiations with the French Government, and with private owners all over the country, led to most successful results and reflect the greatest credit.

The Army Council also wish me to mention that they fully appreciate your sound administration of the Forestry Companies and the many unskilled labourers you had at your disposal. It is also a matter for congratulation that besides the very large amount of timber supplied to the British Armies, the Directorate was in a position to supply no less than 450,000 tons to the French forces.

I am therefore to express to you the Army Council's satisfaction with your work in France and to add that they are glad that they had the opportunity of appointing an officer to such an important post who was so eminently suitable owing to his practical experience of Forestry.

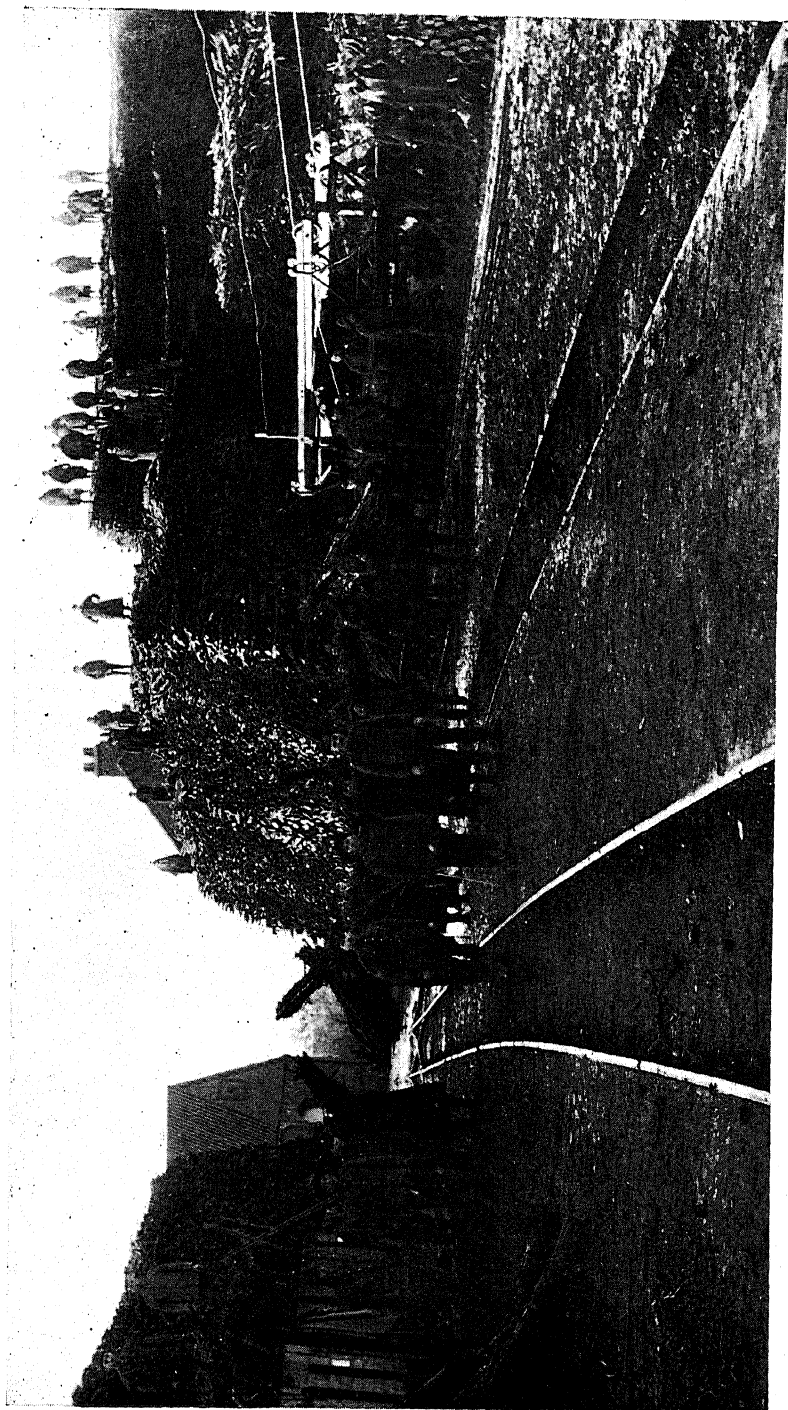
I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

B. B. CUBITT.”

To conclude this chapter, I may perhaps be allowed a personal reminiscence of a visit to France in 1918. I returned



*Timber yard in France*



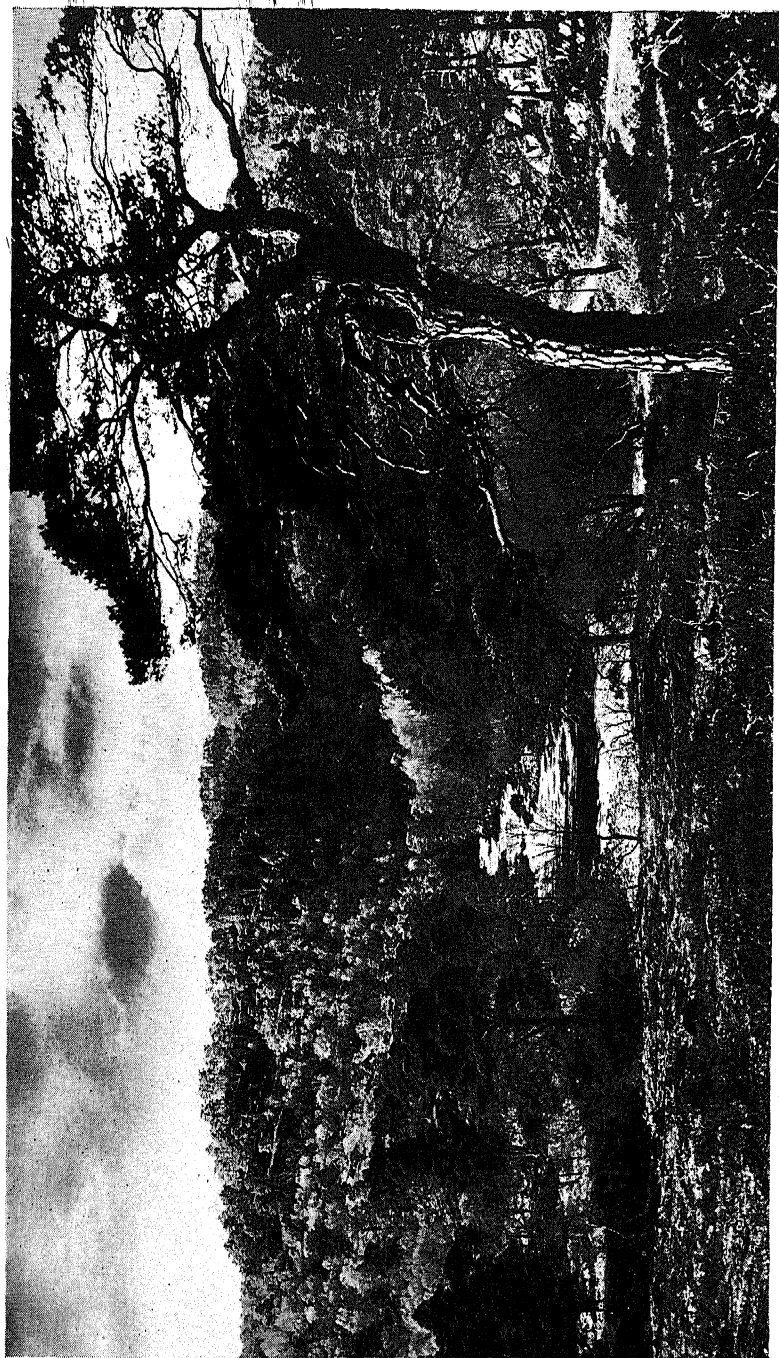
from three years in Petrograd in the spring of 1918 and was ordered back to Russia as Commissioner a few weeks later. Anxious to see the Commander-in-Chief regarding the military position as it affected Russia, and knowing that it was waste of time to apply to the Foreign Office for anything outside routine, I told Lovat who happened to be in London for a few days. "I will take you over with me to-morrow," he said. We went to his Headquarters near Le Touquet and saw Field-Marshal Haig next morning at Montreuil. It was in the month of May and the terrific fighting had died down. On the way back we dined with General Sir Henry Rawlinson and visited the front-line trenches in a peaceful section. Although more than a year had passed since Lovat had given up his official connection with the Sharpshooters, he had come to see the quiet Highlander who was using his telescope on the enemy lines. Greeting him by name, he asked him a number of pertinent questions to which the man replied in his cautious Highland fashion. The fact was that the Front Line had an irresistible attraction for Lovat. His legitimate business took him all over the country, but he gravitated to the Front whenever occasion offered. Meddling with no one else's business and taking credit for nothing that was accomplished, he was welcome at every General's Mess and consulted on many subjects outside the supply of timber. His intimate personal relations with nearly everyone in a high position and with a host of subordinates helped him immensely in his own line of work whenever a hitch arose. Trusted and esteemed by all, he was one of the few great figures in France.

## CHAPTER XI

THE POST-WAR BOOM. SALES OF LAND. THE BEAUFORT HERD OF SHORTHORNS. IMPROVEMENTS OF THE ESTATE. THE HIGHLAND RECONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION. HARNESSING THE BEAULY. LAND SETTLEMENT IN THE HIGHLANDS. THE RHODES TRUST.

1918-1931

THE War was over, and so great was the reaction after four and a half years of unparalleled strain and anxiety that it would have been surprising had not everyone gone a little mad. There was hardly a man, woman or child in the Kingdom who had not temporarily profited, directly or indirectly, by the lavish handing out of Government money. In short, though the fantastic "Douglas Credit System" had not yet been heard of, its principles had been applied since August, 1914. At the top of the scale, vast fortunes had been amassed without the need of skill or forethought; at the bottom, unpractised girls had for years on end earned wages beyond their wildest hopes. Even in the middle, farmers had at last come into their own and many black-coated workers were better off in khaki than ever they were in their offices. Only regular Government servants of all grades and the patriotic minority who had exchanged lucrative jobs for the front were left out. Nor was this the whole story. For, whilst paper money bulged from every pocket, appetites had been forced to remain unsatisfied for four and a half years. Sharpened by the sudden release from physical strain and mental distress, the accumulated hunger demanded satiety at any cost. Dilapidated Rolls-Royce cars changed hands in the streets at £5000 apiece, and choice cuts of meat were snapped up at prices which must have made every pre-War housewife



*Struy*





turn in her grave. The piper would never have to be paid. The millennium had come.

Lovat had not foreseen this period of orgy. The time-lag had deceived him, and in his letter to his wife of February 2nd, 1918, he had anticipated a period of distress immediately following the War—a time during which it would go hard with all those who had heavy commitments outstanding. His own were undiminished and he resolved to seize the opportunity of inflated values to deal with them radically. The property of some 250,000 acres was burdened with a mortgage which could only be seriously reduced by sales. In deciding what to sell he was guided by his abhorrence of anything like selling his "people." He knew them all personally; they were his friends and he would not voluntarily hand them over to some unknown purchaser. So he sold deer forests and a grouse moor where there were neither farmers nor crofters to be considered. Glendoe and a part of Inchnacardoch near Fort Augustus, Corriegarth in Stratherrick and the little forest of Morar on the west coast, without the adjacent crofts and village of Mallaig, went.

Over Struy he had much hesitation. It is a lovely piece of ground with a fine lodge situated just above the junction of the Farrar and the Glass which together form the river Beaully. It had been let for forty years at least, but it was nearer Beaufort than the others and its loss would cut off the fine forest of Braulen in Glenstrathfarrar from the rest of the estate. As one of the few places in the Highlands which afford the combination of good salmon-fishing, good deer-stalking and good grouse-shooting, it would be easy enough to sell and there were no tenants on it. None the less, Lovat would not have sold it had he not received such a price that he felt it would be unfair in the interest of the estate to refuse. So Struy went; and the estate, though reduced by some 100,000 acres in extent, was at last on its legs with a mortgage of manageable size.

When values fell to less than half those of 1919 and 1920 and purchasers had begun to feel the pinch of taxation and depression, it was inevitable that murmurs should be heard in some quarters, and that hard things should be said about the rapacity of Highland landlords. But no one has ever hinted that there was any misrepresentation about these

properties ; and surely if ever the sound legal maxim of *caveat emptor* is to apply it is to transactions such as these. No one is under any obligation to buy a deer forest or grouse moor ; and those who wish to should see that they get value for their money. The seller is not to blame if the income of the purchaser subsequently falls to a point which makes his new forest or moor a burden rather than a pleasure.

Besides reducing the incubus of debt, the post-War boom greatly increased the revenue from a source which had long contributed to the upkeep of the estate. The Beaufort herd of shorthorns, already mentioned in an earlier chapter, had been founded in 1869 by Lovat's father and soon established itself as one of the leading herds in the country. Lovat took such interest in it from the first that his mother and sisters were often heard to complain with some bitterness that it was impossible to have a proper supply of milk for the house. The pampered bull-calves absorbed not only their own mother's meagre yield, but that of several other useful cows as well. Though taking fewer championships than some other northern herds, the Beaufort stock was for some years prime favourite with Argentine buyers and quite commonly fetched higher prices at the Perth and other sales than animals which had beaten them in the show-ring. As early as 1906 the Beaufort bull, "Broadhooks Champion," had made 1500 guineas at Perth—a record which stood for some years ; and this success was followed by "Beaufort Landmarker" which fetched 1050 guineas, took first prize in his class at the Royal Show and was finally re-sold for 4000 guineas in the Argentine. It was part of the ritual on Sunday afternoons to visit the home-farm and respectfully gaze at the valuable monsters paraded for our inspection. Lovat and Mr. John Allanach, the veteran head cattleman who was with the herd for forty-five years, would discuss their points and their chances of improvement in terms which meant little to most of the visitors. "Nice cow to follow" was a phrase often on his lips as he watched one being led back to the byre. The successful breeding of pedigree animals is an art rather than a science and suited Lovat's temperament well. He was a fine judge of stock ; and to this and to his interest in the herd was principally due its fame.



*"Beaufort Broadhooks Jester." Sold for 2000 guineas to the Argentine*



Cut off from new blood for the duration of the War and with bank balances of fantastic proportions, Argentine buyers soon put all previous records in the shade after peace was declared. The best heifers were retained at Beaufort ; but in 1920 the herd was getting too big and a strong draft of the less promising were sold. The fame of that sale will last as long as pedigree cattle are bred in Invernesshire. Six heifers and cows fetched an average of £1203 apiece, and the whole draft of thirty-six animals realized the amazing sum of over £17,000. The tradition has already grown up that every man on the estate connected with the herd was drunk for a week after the sale, a gross exaggeration illustrating the general jubilation. For some years after this triumph prices kept up well, and so late as 1927 "Broadhooks Jester," first in his class at Perth, fetched 2000 guineas.

The ten years following the War were the most prosperous in Lovat's life from the financial point of view. He was able to afford a small house in London where he and his wife entertained a continual stream of interesting people at informal luncheon parties. Visitors from the Dominions were especially welcome and must occasionally have been surprised at their fellow-guests. It was impossible to foresee whom one would meet there. For Lovat was unable to resist asking a friend to lunch and, as he included amongst his friends soldiers, sailors, divines, statesmen, officials, politicians, scientists, travellers and devotees of every form of sport, except possibly bottom-fishing, the conversation never lacked interest. His wife's tastes lay in artistic and literary fields which Lovat made little effort to enter ; though he welcomed her friends and made them his own. He had a few horses in training and, when not busy with one of his numerous serious schemes, was frequently to be seen at race-meetings. There was no longer any question of letting Beaufort during the autumn months and the best grouse moor, Stronelairg, was kept in hand. At last Lovat's hospitable instincts were unrestrained by considerations of money ; and a stay at Beaufort was an inevitable incident in the visit of any person of distinction to Northern Scotland. As in London, a special welcome was reserved for visitors from the Dominions. But, though active as ever, Lovat never really recovered from the effects of his Gallipoli

illness and was subject to not infrequent indisposition which would have kept most others from strenuous pursuits.

At Beaufort great improvements were put in hand. Under his wife's skilful management the garden became one of the most famous in Scotland. Situated, like most Scotch gardens, some way from the house, it consisted of ten acres surrounded by a stupendous wall said to have been built when the fear of a Napoleonic invasion lay heavy even over these remote districts. The great enclosure was intended, so it is believed, to serve as a refuge into which the stock of all the country-side could be driven when the marauding Frenchmen should harry the neighbourhood for supplies. So hard does the Highland tradition of reiving and cattle-lifting die. The water supply had not escaped attention ; for through the middle of the garden flows a clear burn, giving it that last touch of distinction which running water adds to every garden lucky enough to possess it. Under Laura Lovat's eye, a ribbon of turf was laid each side of the burn and was backed by a broad herbaceous border unequalled in splendour of colour and in harmony of arrangement. And, whilst the latter was wholly due to the presiding genius, the former owed much to nature. For it is a fact, deplored but recognized by Southerners, that there is something in a northern climate which brings herbaceous plants, as it does raspberries and black-currants, to a perfection not to be equalled in the South. In this respect Invernesshire can rival even Norway.

Tastes change with the times, and Lovat's resources did not allow him to give full rein to those of his wife and still keep up the grounds on the lines laid out by his mother. These reflected the Victorian love of extensive walks through shrubberies, with benches and little summer-houses skilfully placed where views could be best enjoyed. At one time there were many miles of these walks, for which the high bank above the Beauly and the sides of a tributary burn afforded an ideal setting. Long before Lovat married they had fallen into disrepair through lack of means to keep them up ; and it would have required more labour than could be afforded to make good the ravages of years of exuberant growth of rhododendrons. The walks can still be traced in places ; and here and there a rotting bench

invites the philosopher to ruminate over the mutability of human affairs and the effects of ever-changing fashions.

Nor was Laura Lovat's hand seen only in the garden. The house had benefited much from her taste before the War. In the more spacious period succeeding it a great deal more was done ; and changes in the arrangement as well as additions to the furnishing of the rooms were made. The old "Cornler" would certainly not have approved of all of these ; for the bulk of the sporting trophies collected by members of the family at home, in Africa and in Asia were removed from the most prominent positions on the walls and banished to very humble situations. A vast improvement was the addition of a courtyard enclosing a charming little garden in front of the main entrance, which had been left in an unfinished state. A rickety wooden gate and wire fence were all that prevented the cattle in the park from walking up the main steps, or even into the hall if the doors were open. The courtyard and a pair of handsome iron gates transformed the whole appearance of the front of the castle and dignified it to a surprising degree. Its conception was entirely Laura Lovat's, and was a real stroke of artistic genius.

Whilst his wife had a free hand in the house and grounds, Lovat was busy on the Estate. In receipt of a good income for the first time from investments and directorships, he was able to effect many improvements in housing and development. Planting was extended ; and the foundations were laid for a regular seventy-year rotation of conifers. His ambition was to have 7000 acres of woodland which, once the rotation was established, would allow of 100 acres being felled and replanted every year. From the end of the War to his death he never put less than £5000 or £6000 a year more into the Estate than he took out of it ; and on one occasion he opened the eyes of a London audience accustomed to hear the talk about rapacious landlords. It was in January, 1932, and Dame Maude Royden, sister of his old Magdalen friend Sir Thomas Royden, had asked him to address a meeting for her at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square. Hardly expecting such a busy man to come all the way to London for a meeting outside his usual sphere of action, she was all the more delighted to receive his ready



acceptance. The subject was: "How the agricultural landlord should influence the life of a country." Accompanied by his wife, he came to the Guildhouse and the meeting that followed was amongst the most successful ever held there. So great was his personal magnetism, so compelling his candour and complete sincerity, that his audience, which was in principle absolutely opposed to the private ownership of land, left the Guildhouse saying that, if all landowners were like Lovat, they would be content to leave the land in their hands. The most active heckler insisted on proposing in very cordial terms a vote of thanks for his kindness in coming and for his most illuminating address. Unhappily, whilst the rank and file wish only for better conditions without regard to theories, the fanatics who lead them would rather see people starve under their own nostrums than grow happy and prosperous with the help of such men as Lovat. But to return to Beaufort.

It was during these years of inflation and of hope that the Highlands Reconstruction Association was formed to develop the resources and possible industries of the Highlands. Lovat became the first Chairman of the Association and made at the first meeting a full statement as to its objects. Though the Association was new, there was nothing novel about its objects. They included just the things to which Lovat had devoted half his life, and in his opening speech we find the principal stress laid on the old subjects of afforestation, transport facilities, small holdings, ancillary industries and housing. But Lovat's own experience did add a new and characteristic proposal. It was that the Association should try to secure a proportion of the large amount of material assembled owing to the war in France and in this country. It could be used for light railways, housing, improved telephone communications and other purposes. One other new departure was mentioned—the greater utilization of water-power. The immediate results of the schemes of the Association were as little striking as other activities of the kind elsewhere; but the Association became a valuable clearing-house for ideas and grievances and brought to the notice of the Government and of the public the economic and social needs of the Highlands.

Lovat had one serious anxiety during this period and, by

the irony of fate, it was connected with one of the subjects advocated by him to the Association. Anxious as anyone to make the country a land fit for heroes, we have seen how, if there was one thing which appealed to Lovat more than another, it was any plan for bringing employment to, and developing the resources of, the Highlands and particularly of his own neighbourhood. Singularly free, too free a good many thought, from sentimental considerations of beauty or tradition, he was ready to welcome anything, even something novel or disfiguring to the country-side, which he believed would benefit it materially. But if there was a thing he detested it was a scheme planned ostensibly to forward the objects he had at heart, but calculated in practice to frustrate them and backed by interested motives.

The possibility of "harnessing" the Beaully for the generation of electricity had early caught his imagination and, at one time, those of his friends more interested in the beauty of the Glen than in the welfare of its inhabitants had feared that he might seriously take it up. But after going into it, he dropped the plan on the grounds that the results would not justify the expenditure and disturbance involved. When, therefore, a Bill to authorize a scheme for harnessing the river was promoted in the House of Lords, he resolved to fight it tooth and nail.

The struggle was an arduous one and involved Lovat in much work and great expense. Against him were arrayed an uninstructed public and plausible politicians ready to welcome any scheme in which electricity played a part, as well as all the forces of a great firm of contractors. In this connection people would do well to remember that, in schemes of this kind, contractors are uninterested in final success or failure. So long as the capital is found, whether by the public or the Government, they are bound to make a good, and often a vast profit, however badly the results turn out. Legitimately anxious to employ their men and to earn the rewards of enterprise, they have at their disposal an array of expert witnesses whose testimony is not likely to be biased against a future, or possibly an actual, employer. Lovat, on the other hand, had the support of his own district wholeheartedly behind him; but, though meeting plenty of competent men to agree with him in private, he found it

singularly difficult to get them to testify in public to the truth that was in them. The result was in doubt until the last ; and friends were not lacking to advise Lovat to drop his opposition in exchange for the heavy compensation which he was bound to receive under the scheme. The argument did not appeal to him and he redoubled his efforts ; searching Norway and Switzerland for facts concerning hydro-electric stations, their cost and their output.

The Bill came finally before a Committee of the House of Lords in May, 1929. Lord Younger, the Chairman, died a month later ; and Lovat was forced to withdraw from the case as he could not stand the cost involved in its rehearing. Fortunately, however, the County Councils of Inverness, Perth, Ross and Cromartie, Morayshire, Stirling and the town of Inverness, reinforced by the Scottish Mining Association, took up the opposition, and in November, 1929, the Bill was rejected on the ground that the scheme was uneconomical and injurious to the mining industry. The relief was immense. One of the most lovely glens in Scotland was saved from disfigurement, dozens of farmers were kept on the land and the district escaped the crushing burden of exorbitant prices for electricity. Let us hope that some other of the ambitious Highland water-power schemes will have had time to show their true financial results before a second powerful firm of contractors casts its eye on the Beaulieu.

It is a curious phenomenon that wars awake a general desire in Englishmen to get back to the land. Whether it is that primitive instincts assert themselves as the result of fighting, or that years of open-air life make men loath to revert to sedentary occupations, or that the herded existence of camp and trench give rise to a longing for solitude and quiet, or, possibly, that some obscure and deep-buried love of the soil and the country-side is roused by the squalor and horrors of war, it is a fact that the dream of countless Englishmen returning home from war has been to settle on the land. Lovat had noticed this longing after the South African War and, familiar with the psychology of the men, he foresaw that it would be greatly exaggerated when the Great War ended. Knowing what disappointments might be in store for returning soldiers, not least for those whose

dreams came true, he gave a deal of thought to Land Settlement whilst outwardly employed in many other ways.

The Government had not neglected the question, and in 1916 brought a Small Holdings Bill based on the report of a Committee of which Mr. Charles Hobhouse had succeeded Sir Henry Verney as Chairman. The Bill did not profess to be more than an experimental measure to provide small-holdings for discharged or disabled sailors and soldiers ; and the only new feature in it was that the men were to be placed together in little colonies. Happening to be on leave in June, 1916, Lovat made an important contribution to the debate in the House of Lords. Emphasizing his conviction that numbers of ex-service men would wish to settle on the land after the War, he considered the Bill parochial and inadequate. There should be co-operation with the Dominions and Colonies and a body comprised of leading men should be set up to hammer out a complete scheme. The spare time of the Boards of Agriculture in England and Scotland was insufficient to deal with such an important question ; and the money provided under the Bill was inadequate. Plenty of help would be forthcoming from landlords if those at the top enjoyed their confidence. Lord Lucas had made an offer in Scotland and others would follow provided that they believed that the administration would be fair and economical. The Board of Agriculture in Scotland had never once considered the possibility of linking land-settlement with afforestation.

When Lovat made this speech, he had hardly begun his work on the Acland Forestry Committee ; but it is clear that his mind was already moving in the direction which it finally took in the Acland Report. For the sort of body he advocated for dealing with Land Settlement was exactly that which the Forestry Act of 1919 set up to deal with afforestation. The two subjects were, as has been shown again and again, considered by Lovat to be complementary ; and the success attained by the Forestry Commission makes one wonder whether a Land Settlement Commission, composed of men equal in calibre to the Forestry Commissioners, might not have secured equally fine results. The task would certainly have been more difficult and complex, but the achievement could scarcely have been less

striking than that reached by the methods employed. It would be tedious to enumerate all the occasions on which Lovat spoke on this subject. The line he took was invariably the same—welcoming anything in the various Government Bills which he believed would put more people on the land and enable them to stay there in decent comfort, criticizing most of the proposals as inadequate and unlikely to achieve their object ; and never losing an opportunity of laying stress on the necessity of co-operation between all the parties concerned and on the desirability of linking land settlement in the Highlands with afforestation. In his later speeches he pressed continually for a declaration of policy regarding cereals, before thousands of inexperienced men were put on the land to replace experienced men who had failed owing to the fall in prices ; and, in speaking on the Agricultural Land Utilization Bill of 1931, he pointed out that the Co-operative Wholesale Society had lost two millions in ten years whilst farming forty to seventy thousand acres. In a debate on the Town and County Planning Bill, he complained that recent legislation ignored the local authorities and showed distrust of the man on the spot. The rage for uniformity was as harmful as was the creation of herds of new officials. Whether Lovat's years of work and trenchant criticisms based on that work will ever bear fruit we do not know ; but it is melancholy to reflect that, up to the present, they have entirely failed in their purpose of putting more people on the land and keeping them there in decent comfort.

Though never believing that small-holders in the Highlands could hold their own without some outside occupation, he did his best after the War to help the various Government schemes. Though reluctant to part with any low ground, he sold three of his best farms near Beaully to the Board of Agriculture in 1920 in order that thereby smallholdings might be carved out of them. He also broke up the sheep farm of Glasnacardoch, near Morar, where he established fourteen small-holders and did the same with several other west-coast farms.

During this period Lovat gave a certain amount of his time to the work of the Rhodes Trust. He had been elected a Trustee in July, 1917, and, after the death of Sir Otto

Beit in 1930, became Senior Trustee and took the Chair at meetings of the Trust. Lord Milner had been Chairman during his lifetime and had given a great deal of time and thought to the work. Though Lovat did not devote so much time to it as Lord Milner had done, he was an active Trustee of an enterprise which appealed strongly to his Imperial instincts and was in line with much of his own work. Apart from the general business of the Trust, he was principally interested in the promotion of overseas settlement and imperial forestry. Almost the only public activity of the Trust is the Annual Dinner to Rhodes Scholars at Oxford. Lovat presided at the dinners in 1923 and 1927 and at the latter function had the pleasure of welcoming Sir Robert Borden.

## CHAPTER XII

THE ACLAND COMMITTEE AND REPORT. SETTING UP OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION AND LOVAT'S WORK AS FIRST CHAIRMAN. IMPERIAL FORESTRY CONFERENCES IN LONDON AND CANADA. THE MONTAGU MISSION TO BRAZIL. BRAZIL PLANTATIONS SYNDICATE AND PARANA PLANTATIONS SYNDICATE. COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY PROBLEMS.

1918-1928

IN 1916, before Lovat took over the Timber Directorate in France, there came into being a Sub-committee on Forestry, set up under Mr. Lloyd George's Reconstruction programme. The Chairman was Sir Francis Acland, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Agriculture under Lord Selborne. It was known as the Acland Committee; and, in addition to the Chairman, its most active members were Sir William Schlich, Mr. (now Sir Roy) Robinson, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Mr. (now Sir John) Sutherland and Lovat—one of the last two nearly always coming over from France in 1917 for the meetings. Besides these active members, there were a host of others who naturally wanted to make some contribution to the common stock. Many of their proposals were as absurd as they were well-meaning and called into play all Lovat's diplomacy in killing them without offence. Under a chairman whose object was to get things done and not to glorify himself, this mixed team worked in perfect harmony and produced a report, the only report since the War of which the recommendations have since been carried out almost to the letter. Mr. Robinson drafted the technical side, Sir Francis Acland did the historical summary and introduction, and Sir John Stirling-Maxwell the land-settlement chapter. Lovat watched over the whole and the general plan outlined in the report was largely his.

With such a chairman, backed by such competent and public-spirited men as have been mentioned, it would be absurd to ascribe the excellence of the Report only to Lovat's influence. But he did make a very special contribution to it by his clearness of mind, driving force and power of composing differences ; and he took an individual and strong line in regard to two important points of administration. These were ; that there must be a single authority for the whole of Great Britain ; and that certain services, e.g., research and education, must be centralized at Commission Headquarters. And it is a good example of his indifference to theories and readiness to judge things on their merits that he, who had so often complained of centralization, should be the first to insist on it when he thought it necessary.

The Report was presented to the Cabinet Reconstruction Committee, who at once took in hand the preliminaries for carrying it out. At this stage an attempt was made by some back-stair conspirators to upset one of its most vital provisions. Before the War, the care of forests had, after innumerable enquiries, been entrusted to the Department of Agriculture and to the Development Commission. In five years this régime had produced no result, because forestry with its far-off returns always had to give way to more immediately attractive claims. The only chance of progress was to put it on its own legs with a grant of its own ; and the whole scheme of the Acland Report was based on the supposition that this would be done. It was now proposed to make the expenditure of the Forestry Authority subject to the consent of the Development Commissioners ; and a little later, under the same influences, the Scottish Office developed a well-sustained offensive against setting up a Central Authority. In a situation of this kind Lovat was on his mettle. Much as he abhorred quarrelling, he disliked still more being defeated by mining operations. Setting to work personally on various members of the Cabinet, he stiffened their backs with such good arguments that they dared to face and overcame the opposition of the Government Departments. In the midst of these storms, an Interim Forest Authority was set up under Sir Francis Acland in November 1918, pending the legislation necessary to inaugurate a regular Forestry Commission. The Forestry Act, which



followed in detail the recommendations of the Acland Report, was passed in the autumn of 1919. It provided that the Commission should consist of eight members, of whom three only should be paid, and should receive a grant of £3,500,000 to cover the work for the first ten years. As a matter of fact, Lovat and Mr. Robinson, the technical Commissioner, were the only two who were paid; Lovat, after a good deal of hesitation, accepting a salary for fear that his successor might be hampered if he served without one.

The first Forestry Commissioners were appointed in November, 1919. Sir Francis Acland had an obvious and legitimate expectation of becoming Chairman of the Commission; and, apart from any claims based on his recent work, he was fully qualified and admirably fitted for the post. But he stood aside and strongly recommended Mr. Bonar Law to appoint Lovat. In a new Government Department with new duties, the personnel is of even greater importance than in a going concern. For no traditions are there to check irregularities and exuberances in the present; and the worth of the Department in the future depends on the lines on which those traditions are built up. The first Forestry Commission was so well-chosen from this point of view and established a tradition which has proved so invaluable that the names should be given in full: Lovat, Chairman, Sir Roy Robinson, Technical Commissioner, and Sir Francis Acland, Lord Clinton, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Mr. T. B. Ponsonby and Mr. W. Steuart-Fotheringham.

Lovat set about his task in characteristic fashion. Even before he was officially appointed, he invited all the prospective Commissioners and the principal officers to Beaufort for a conference and tour round parts of Scotland. To meet the urgent demand for trained men, he provided a site at Beaufort for an apprentice school for foresters; and at the other end of the scale he formed a forestry dining club, at which Commissioners and officials dined once a month and met interesting guests. The Forest Service being entirely new, there was a free choice in manning the ship, and here Lovat was at his best. There were extraordinarily few misfits. For the actual charge of planting operations only foresters of proved ability from private estates were employed. The key positions were the Assistant Commissioners to

administer England, Scotland and Ireland respectively. For the two first Sir Hugh Murray, a retired Indian Forester of independent means who had proved the best officer of the Timber Supply Department in London during the War, and Mr. John Sutherland, whom we have seen earlier in France, were chosen—not for scientific knowledge of British forestry, but for their trusted fairness and good sense.

Before the Commission was properly on its legs, came the famous Geddes Committee which made a dead set at the Commission and its work and, in spite of Lovat's spirited defence, reported that it was ripe for the axe. Enlisting the help of his friends in the Cabinet, especially that of Mr. Edwin Montagu, then Secretary of State for India, and of others outside it, Lovat saved the ship. But all superfluous cargo had to be jettisoned and a good deal of sail taken in.

During the first two years of the Commission, Lovat devoted practically his whole time to it. When not in the office, he was inspecting areas contemplated or acquired in England, Scotland and Ireland. In touch with the new machine at every point, he never interfered unless interference was necessary; and at the meetings of the Commission, held then as now, once a month, he laid down rules on matters on which he felt no latitude could be allowed. In dealing with the Treasury, for instance, it was an absolute rule that all the cards should be on the table and that "My Lords" should always be consulted before and not, as by some Departments, after action had been taken. In technical matters he could be adamant. Rabbits, that scourge of foresters and agriculturists, were anathema to him; and woe betide the keeper whose beat at Beaufort showed traces of their presence. No excuse was accepted and, if a trapper employed by the Commission did not keep the rabbits down, he went. The result was that there was no serious trouble with rabbits even in the Eastern Counties. It was the same with deer. An officer in whose district severe damage had been done by deer will not soon forget the public dressing down he got from Lovat when he saw it. But were a man doing his best, Lovat always gave him a chance of explaining his work and airing his ideas. He was seldom critical and never contemptuous. Whatever the man's rank, he was

treated as a confidential colleague. Everyone delighted in his inspections.

When the Commission was involved in controversy with other Departments, impossible landowners or politicians, Lovat would listen until the indignation had worked itself off and then say cheerfully: "That's all very well; but there must be something wrong somewhere. The case can't possibly appear like that to the other side." This was usually the prelude to an interview with the enemy and nearly always to a satisfactory settlement. The use of compulsory powers was against Lovat's instinct for co-operation; and when anyone proposed using those of the Commission he was always dead against it on the ground that it would only make acquisition more difficult. He had profited by his experience of the Department of Agriculture in Scotland, which brought its compulsory powers into play whenever it could not get what it wanted, with the result that it spent half its grant on litigation and, at the end of five years, had not a friend in the country.

Neither criticisms of the new Department nor opposition to some of its schemes were wanting. One, at least, had its amusing side when a delegation to protest against planting some hillocks near Camberley was found to be headed by the same individual who had protested against the same hillocks being cleared of trees during the War. A slip of paper mentioning this fact was passed to Lovat whilst the deputation was being heard. But he resisted the temptation to make a fool of the man and the hillocks were left unplanted. The New Forest was transferred to the care of the Commission by the Act of 1919 and soon became a bone of contention, as it has remained ever since, between the lovers of beauty and a Department which wished for returns on its outlay. There can be no doubt where Lovat's real sympathies lay; but he steered a wise middle course and assured his critics that Scots pine and other soft wood, though necessary, would not be planted where hard-wood would grow. His last act as Chairman was to invite a committee to advise the Commission regarding the treatment of certain special areas in the New Forest.

The advent of the first Labour Government was watched with some anxiety by Lovat, both on account of its unknown

character and because the period for which the Commission had been appointed ran out in November, 1924. The Government itself was anxious to encourage forestry ; but there were elements in, and connected with, the Government (notably the Haldanes) who had fought against the principle of a Central Authority from the start. It was, therefore, with some trepidation that the Commissioners submitted in February, 1924, a Memorandum on Forest Policy and their own work. A Cabinet Committee was set up to go into the question, and Lovat and Mr. Robinson appeared. So masterly and effective was Lovat's statement that none of the half-dozen Cabinet Ministers, with Lord Haldane amongst them, found a word to say ; and Mr. Snowden from the Chair declared the Commission had proved their case. The grant in aid was increased ; and an expanding planting programme and the formation of forest workers' holdings were authorized. The speedy fall of the Labour Government brought in a Cabinet pledged to a policy of economy ; but Lovat was able to arrange a satisfactory *modus vivendi* direct with Mr. Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer ; and the Commission was not seriously worried about finance during the rest of his Chairmanship.

Besides being subject to criticism for its planting policy, the Commission came under fire at regular intervals on the ground that it was not under Parliamentary control ; and in 1925 Lovat had to define its position in reply to Earl Russell in the House of Lords. He pointed out that the Commission made an Annual Report and that its work was reviewed by the Cabinet from time to time. Expenditure, authorized under a block grant for ten years, was controlled by the Treasury and submitted to Parliament. The personnel was also controlled in the sense that their salaries came out of the Forestry Grant which could be reduced when the Estimates came before the House of Commons. The only difference between the Forestry Commission and any other Department was that the Chairman was not an Under-Secretary or a member of the Government ; and this had been decided after careful scrutiny by a Cabinet sub-committee in order to ensure continuity of policy. This answer stated the facts, but it may have led the uninitiated to underestimate the freedom from Parliamentary and bureau-

cratic control enjoyed by the Commission. Without this freedom Lovat would not have accepted the post of Chairman, nor would the Commission have achieved the success it has under him and his three successors, Lord Clinton, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell and Sir Roy Robinson. As long as the Commission is manned by such men as the original members, there is no fear of its liberty of action leading to anything but efficiency combined with strict economy.

But in spite of the strength of the original Commission, Lovat considered it a mistake that there was no representation of the Labour Party on it. So during the first brief Labour Government he took great pains to select a good Labour Member of Parliament. Before he could be actually appointed, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald fell ; and many people would have waited for a vacancy before making the appointment. Lovat saw that that was bound to be misinterpreted and got one of his friends to resign in favour of Mr. Walter Smith. The latter proved his worth by contriving to get two more good Labour men when Mr. MacDonald came into power a second time. By that time the Act of 1926 had given the Commission power to increase its number and to make by-laws. By the Act of 1923 it had already taken over all the Crown woods and forests.

Not content with fostering forestry in the United Kingdom, the Commission, soon after their appointment in 1919, decided to convene an Empire Forestry Conference ; and a gathering of representative foresters from Great Britain, the Dominions and the colonies met in the following year. Under the guidance of Lovat, who was in the Chair, important work was done in collecting comprehensive information regarding the forests of the Empire, in stressing the value of proper treatment of their great areas and generally in hammering out the essentials of forest policy which included the setting up of a Central Institution for higher forestry training. Inevitably the overseas delegates were entertained at Beaufort. Encouraged by this experience, a second British Empire Forestry Conference was held in Canada in 1923 with Lovat again in the Chair. The work of the first Conference was consolidated and extended and important forest areas in the East and West were visited. Here Lovat was in his element, being welcomed by his old

1918-1928]

## LORD LOVAT

friends of Quebec days and of the Canadian Forestry Corps who had served under him in France. A letter to his wife from Edmonton gives a good idea of his experience.

“FORESTRY TOUR,

EDMONTON, CANADA.

*August 15th, 1923.*

We arrived here and are in a very comfortable hotel. Had a good bath and wash. We have visited during the last two days Winnipeg and Regina Forest Stations, and inspected many areas. I had to make the usual speeches, one on arrival and one on leaving. No wonder the Americans are good at speaking. I am becoming a positive wind-bag. I gave an address on ‘Forestry in Peace and War’ at Winnipeg and opened a debate in Regina on Canadian Forestry Problems. Everyone is most extraordinarily kind, twenty cars are put at our disposal. I always try and get some golf with someone from Scotland, old Scout, old tenant, etc. I have met literally scores of old friends. I feel we can do so little for the Canadians when they come over and they do so much for us. We were entertained royally at Quebec. Our usual procedure is to travel all night on the train, arrive at our destination at daybreak and have early breakfast. Fleets of cars run us out to the woods, lunch in the forest (lumberman’s lunch, which we all have to pretend is ‘the first we have ever seen’), then back into cars and inspect mills and pulping operations, an hour for games or rest, then dinner, more speeches and entertainment. To bed about twelve and travel all night and so *da capo*. I have met many old friends, White, MacDougall, half our French Forestry Corps.”

Another letter tells of his meetings with Americans.

“FORESTRY TOUR,

WISCONSIN.

*September 5th, 1923.*

I am really quite addled with work, business and travel. After Victoria we went to Seattle ; there I attended a

Senator's Meeting ; it was rather interesting. The Americans are just as anxious about their disappearing forests as the Canadians. They asked me to address a Committee which I did, and told them some home truths which were very well received. I first got them to agree to no publication and then told them what we were doing, some principles of European forestry, their application in North America, Canada, etc. Loud applause from the hall. It is curious what you can get away with in North America if you mix constructive criticism with heavy dollops of flattery."

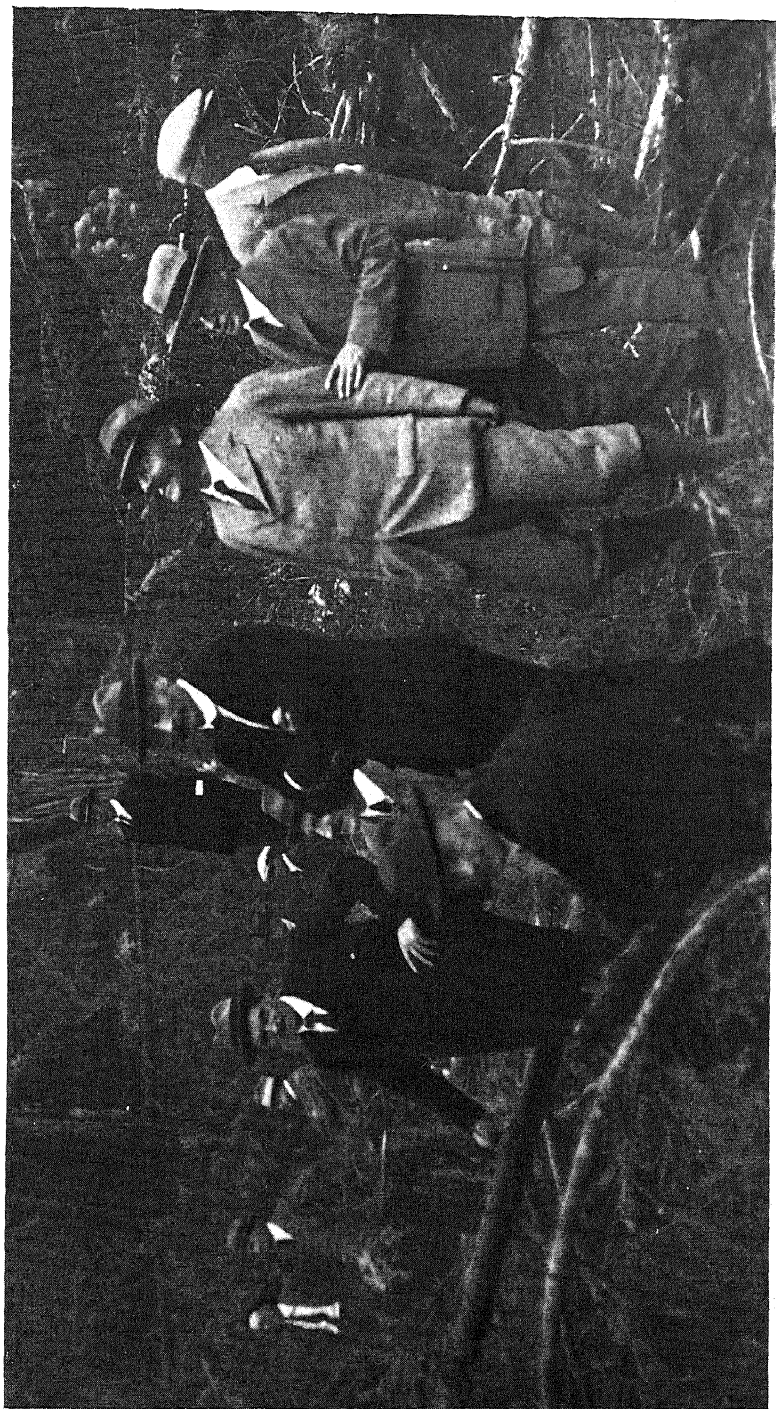
The reference to "home truths" in this letter applies particularly to a statement quoted in 1933 by the Department of the Interior, Ottawa, in a publication entitled *Forest Facts in Canada*. The extract from this Government publication is worth giving :

"Apropos of the general attitude of the Canadian people in this regard, it may not be amiss to quote the late Lord Lovat, formerly head of the British Forestry Commission, and for many years an outstanding exponent of the need for the application of more rational forestry methods :

'It is an unfortunate fact, but one that it is necessary to mention, that while our race is the least interested of all nations in forestry science, we are of all nations the most active in the destruction of forest resources. Canadian sawmills, American logging organizations, New Zealand and Australian axemen are the last word in efficiency and despatch. Almost every devilish invention for the destruction of growing timber owes its conception to the Anglo-Saxon mind.'

The implication of the foregoing assertion is that while we have displayed an extraordinary amount of ingenuity in building up an industry to consume our timber supplies, we have lagged far behind in the protection and rational development of the very resource upon which that industry must depend."

An extract from an intimate letter to his wife shows how Lovat kept his family constantly in mind :



*In a Canadian forest!*





*To his wife.*

“Sept. 10th, 1923.

— has only a short time to live and you must not kill yourself nursing him as you are doing. You belong to this generation, not to the past. You have done more than you can do, do not try the impossible and fail in your duty to those who for many years to come will be dependent on you, when — will have gone to what must be a great reward for such inconceivable sufferings.”

About his son who is in the Outer Hebrides :

“Do not let Shimi shoot sea-gulls. He is living with seafaring people and they are superstitious. He can shoot cormorants and ducks, but no seagulls or they will think him unlucky.”

The most important recommendation of the Conference was to recapitulate the demand for a Central Institution for higher forestry training which had not materialized owing to the financial difficulties of 1922. On getting back from Canada, Lovat persuaded the Government to give effect to this recommendation as far as they were concerned. In doing so he had to deal with the Imperial Economic Conference which was sitting when he returned. The Colonies again did their share, as they had done when the first attempt failed, and though insufficient financial support was forthcoming from the Empire as a whole, the Institute was started at Oxford in 1924 and is still working under the wise guidance of Professor R. S. Troup, who has been its Director since its foundation. The Institute has already done much valuable work and, if it can be got permanently on its feet with adequate buildings and finance, it may play a very important part in the proper conservation and development of the enormous forest areas of the Empire. In short, it may become a lasting monument to Lovat's vision and foresight, though it will have been left to others to carry out his general ideas.

A third Empire Forestry Conference was held in New Zealand in 1928, and Lovat had timed his Empire Tour as Chairman of the Overseas Settlement Committee to coincide with it. But, though in New Zealand at the time, as will be

seen later, he was too ill to take part in it. Besides these Empire Conferences, Lovat attended an International Conference at Rome. From this he drew more amusement than profit as the following extract from a letter written to me on May 11th, 1926, shows :

“ We had a most amusing Conference. One of the few bits of real progress was made by my Committee on World Forestry Statistics in the teeth of the Italians who wished to pull matters in a way to suit themselves.

Everything going on steadily here (at home). It may be a long business but, provided we can keep out of reprisals, I think all should be settled and for some time.”

This last paragraph refers, I believe, to the Coal Strike. I have inserted it as an illustration of Lovat's general dislike of strife.

When Lovat left the Commission, it had acquired about 250,000 acres of plantable land of which it had planted 90,000 acres. In his last year 22,000 acres were planted ; and about 42,000 had been planted by agencies other than the State with the help of grants from the Commission. That such results were achieved in the face of the lukewarm support and even direct opposition often encountered is the best tribute to Lovat's work. That his methods were peculiar to himself is shown by an amusing letter from a great friend and close collaborator in his forestry work :

“ Simon, as you know, had no business training and did not know how to keep his papers in order. He carried about a dreadful portmanteau crammed with documents which used to burst out in a cascade when it was opened. I suppose they collected while he was away from the office, where he had an extremely efficient private secretary. On the other hand, his minutes, though illegible, were admirably short and clear. His decisions were arrived at quickly and he never allowed arrears of work to accumulate. His writings and speeches were occasionally very good, but they were not his strong point. His strong points were his ability to distinguish between what mattered and what did not and his extraordinary gift for carrying other people with him.”

The following is an extract from the 8th Annual Report of the Commission :

*“ Resignation of Lord Lovat.*

On the 3rd March, 1927, the Rt. Hon. Lord Lovat, to the regret of his colleagues of all ranks, resigned from the Forestry Commission on taking up another appointment. As first Chairman of the Commission he will always be remembered for the manner in which he laid the foundation of a new organization and for the skill with which he overcame the difficulties which inevitably arise in bringing a new Act into operation. His gift for administration and his practical knowledge of forestry were of the utmost value in shaping the Commission's policy, while his keen and untiring work, in office and forest, set a high standard of duty, which the Service built up under his guidance was quick to appreciate.”

In spite of indifferent health he had guided a great new enterprise through its early difficulties, as no one else could have done ; and the miles of barren land now covered with fine woodlands over the length and breadth of the country entitled him to say, with one whose work was in stone and not in wood : “ *Si monumentum requiris circumspecte.*”

For the first two years of the life of the Forestry Commission, his work as Chairman was a whole-time job for Lovat—almost the only period of his life in time of peace when any single job can be called a whole-time one for him. But when the new machine began to run smoothly, he was ready to turn to fresh fields. The opportunity came in the winter of 1923 and 1924, when a Mission was formed on the invitation of the Brazilian Government to make a confidential study of economic and financial conditions in Brazil with the ultimate object of developing the resources of the country with the help of British capital. The Rt. Hon. Edwin Montagu was Chairman of the Mission and it was he who asked Lovat to serve on it. The two men, though of strangely different temperaments and gifts, were close friends. Lovat looked up to Montagu for his imagination and penetrating intellect, whilst Montagu admired in Lovat those qualities of a man

of action which he himself lacked. The other members of the Mission were Sir Charles Addis, Sir William McLintock and Mr. Hartley Withers—all well-known authorities on economics and finance. Although British influence and prestige in the field of international politics had dwindled to a mere shadow since 1919, they were still high in questions of finance ; and the advice of British experts was not only often sought in this period, but even occasionally followed. Unfortunately, however, the finance and economy of a country depend on the political background and on the ideas prevailing in those circles which are of importance politically. In Brazil these had not been favourable to development on sound lines and, though vast amounts of British capital had been sunk in the country, much of it had brought but little profit or security to the investor. Post-War optimism had not evaporated in 1924, and it was hoped that the Montagu Mission would inaugurate a new era of prosperity and progress. The voyage out was, as often before, employed in trying to learn the language of the country he was visiting.

“ December 23rd, 1923.

We are *en route* to Brazil with the Montagu Commission. To-morrow we strike Brazil. The voyage has been non-eventful. Lovely weather every day. I get up at seven and play deck tennis, a very hot game ; then swim in deck swimming-bath, breakfast, write, then McLintock and I have a two hours' lesson in Portuguese—our instructress is a beautiful young (rather hooknosed) Portuguese lady—from which I hurry to hear the result of the ship's 'sweep' (I have won a minor prize four times) and so to lunch. After lunch read, at 4.30 more deck tennis with Venetia,<sup>1</sup> swim, Bezique with Edwin whom I always beat, then dinner. After dinner bad bridge, then read and read and bed 11.30.”

With such strong financial and economic representation on the Mission, Lovat devoted the two months which the Mission stayed in Brazil to a study of the agricultural and

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Mrs. Edwin Montagu.

timber resources of the country for which his experience in the Sudan and in forestry matters eminently qualified him. A Government agricultural expert, Dr. Emilio Castello, who spoke English, was attached to him ; and together they travelled far and wide in the interior in order to see as much as possible of local conditions in the time available. The pioneering instincts so strong in Lovat were kindled by what he saw awaiting development—vast areas of virgin forest land, well watered, with a kindly climate and with soil as good as, or better than, the best that he had ever seen in the course of all his wanderings in Africa and elsewhere. Brimming with enthusiasm, he recounted all he had seen to Sir Frederick Eckstein and to his other colleagues on the Board of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate immediately on his return to England. He particularly stressed two points ; first that Brazil relied too much on one crop—everyone there was “ coffee mad ”—which provided about 70 per cent in value of Brazilian exports ; secondly that Brazil possessed every natural condition existing in the United States for the successful cultivation of cotton, the development of which was too neglected. He saw great possibilities for the extension of cotton-growing in the Northern States at some future date, but advised that, as a first step, an attempt should be made in Sao Paulo and in the north of Parana, where conditions were less backward and railway communications better than in the North.

As usual he did not content himself with academic recommendations, but was anxious to back the faith that was in him by immediate action. He communicated his own enthusiasm to his colleagues, and in April, 1924, a company was formed called Brazil Plantations Syndicate, with a capital of £200,000, privately subscribed, the first Directors being Lovat, Chairman, Sir Frederick Eckstein, and Brigadier-General the Hon. A. M. Asquith (Directors of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate), Mr. Edward Greene (of the Brazil Warrants Company, a man of long Brazilian experience) and Sir James Calder (who had a special knowledge of timber questions).

In April, 1924, Mr. A. H. M. Thomas, a member of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate's Sudan staff, went to Brazil to organize the cotton growing activities of this new company

in collaboration with Dr. Castello, who had resigned from the Government's service.

Two estates were acquired, one of about 2850 acres at Guatambu on the Noroeste Railway in the State of Sao Paulo, and the other of about 9000 acres, called the Santa Emilia, in the north of the State of Parana, near the station of Salto Grande on the Sorocabana Railway; and in the neighbourhood of both estates cotton ginning factories were erected.

Not long after cotton growing had been successfully organized upon these two estates, cotton prices slumped whilst coffee prices rose, the result being that the best local labour found that money could be earned more easily upon the coffee plantations than in the cotton fields, and cotton growing had to be abandoned. This was a bitter disappointment to Lovat, who had invested heavily, as had many of his friends, in the Syndicate. Accompanied by his nephew, the Earl of Eldon, and Sir Frederick Eckstein, he again visited Brazil in the spring of 1925, and a letter to his wife written on the journey shows how emigrants were at that time flocking out; it is perhaps characteristic of his pre-occupation with home problems that he should instinctively institute a comparison between his Portuguese fellow-passengers and the Highlanders whose needs and tastes were more familiar to him:

*"March, 1925.*

I am just back from a run ashore at Lisbon. I wished a million times you were with me to see a wonderful garden belonging to a friend of Eckstein's. There were masses of Japanese iris, arum lilies, periwinkles, giant burrages, Judas trees, roses, and trees of your favourite geranium, all in a mass of blossom rioting down to the sea—quite lovely! We also visited an aquarium, which would have pleased the children.

We pick up emigrants at every step. I went down to see their lodgings this morning, smelly, but not too bad. Numerous families and all fairly jolly. They are from a hot country and going to one equally warm. I do not think they have the same clinging to home as the West Coast Highlander, although he only leaves the bare rocks behind him."

Lovat and his companions were much impressed by the unrivalled fertility of the virgin forest areas in the north of the State of Parana, and an opportunity soon occurred to acquire some three million acres of these forests, situated about 180 kilometres from a railway. A new company with a capital of £700,000 was formed for the purpose under the name of Parana Plantations Limited, with Sir Frederick Eckstein as Chairman and Lovat on the Board with the other Directors of the Brazil Plantations Syndicate. Besides acquiring the property, the company was to provide it with railway communication and open it up for settlement. We will leave the further history of the new company till the appropriate chronological place.

Lovat's knowledge of the kind of agricultural conditions obtaining in the Colonial Empire was widened by his Brazilian visit and he had already great experience of administration. It was, therefore, natural that he should be invited to assist in investigations regarding agricultural policy in the Crown Colonies. In 1924 the first of a series of Committees was set up by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to report on various aspects of organization and administration of the Agricultural Departments of the Crown Colonies. The Departments had grown up independently in the different Colonies and some of them, especially in the smaller ones, were far from satisfactory. The preponderant importance of agriculture as the main Colonial industry is obvious and the whole organization of it required investigation. The first requirement was to improve the personnel; and a Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lord Milner, with Lovat as Vice-Chairman, was constituted to report on the question of recruitment for the services.

An interim Report was submitted in the spring of 1925 and, Lord Milner dying soon after, Lovat was appointed Chairman of this and of the further Committees which were set up to examine and submit recommendations on the whole subject of agricultural organization in the non-self-governing Dependencies.

The terms of reference covered a very wide range and involved proposals novel in character and of far-reaching effect. A short summary of the principal findings and re-



commendations are given in an appendix to this chapter, and they indicate clearly that, taken as a whole, they constitute the basis of a workable scheme, reasonably elastic, and calculated to ensure that the industry—which is far the most important in the different countries concerned—shall be adequately provided with a first-rate agricultural and scientific staff. The importance of this is becoming increasingly apparent everywhere, but nowhere more so than in the tropics, where varied and complex, and comparatively unfamiliar fundamental conditions of soil and climate, together with the accompaniment of problems of nutrition, diseases, and living pests are continually making demands on the best expert knowledge that is available. This involves the provision of facilities for the scientific study of the plants and animals as a whole in relation to their whole environment, whereby new and valuable knowledge may be acquired, and the accruing results placed at the disposal of the agricultural populations.

The foregoing condensed account of the problems which confronted the Committees will suffice to indicate the magnitude of their task. For Lovat's share in the achievements of the Committees I cannot do better than quote Sir J. Farmer, whose work on agricultural research and kindred matters is known to everyone interested in the scientific side of agriculture: "I am convinced that every one of us was deeply sensible of our good fortune in the selection of our Chairman. It may be said without fear of exaggeration that if it had not been for the constructive ability he displayed, and for the skilful manner in which he smoothed difficulties arising out of divergencies of opinion, sometimes on vital points of policy, it would have been quite impossible that schemes so coherent and, in the end, admittedly well fitted to secure the objects to be attained, could have been framed. The schemes have been subjected to close criticism from all the parties affected, those who have to work them as well as those who can independently judge of their practicability, and in each instance the verdict has been favourable. The stringent financial conditions of the last few years have resulted in the deferring of executive action, but so far as I am aware, there has been no seriously adverse criticism of the proposals as a whole. And I do not hesitate to say, and I say,

with no fear of contradiction, that it is to Lord Lovat himself that a very large share of the credit for this is due. He never spared himself, and he also never failed to examine carefully the full implications of all the suggestions that emerged in our discussions. The clearness and breadth of vision, no less than his complete grasp of the whole range of the subjects of discussion was surprising, and he handled difficult situations with the enjoyment and confidence of one who is really 'on top of his job.'

But if the Committees over which he presided so admirably and so resourcefully were fortunate, the Dependencies themselves who are concerned in the actual or potential working of the schemes, assuredly owe no less a debt of gratitude to Lord Lovat which must ensure for him a lasting and honoured name in the history of their future development."

#### APPENDIX

The Milner Committee was originally set up in 1924 to deal with the serious difficulties which had been experienced after the Great War in recruiting suitably trained officers for the Agricultural Departments of the non-self-governing Dependencies. Viscount Milner was Chairman and Lord Lovat Vice-Chairman of this Committee. Lord Milner died shortly after the Committee had presented an interim report (in March, 1925), and Lord Lovat succeeded him as Chairman. The terms of reference to the Committee were extended to cover the much larger question of how best to improve the efficiency of agricultural administration and research in the Dependencies. The interim report above referred to, which was drafted before Viscount Milner's death, was published as Part I of Cmd. 2825.

This report was sent out to the Colonies, and resulted in the creation of the Colonial Agricultural Scholarship Scheme, a complete history of which is given in the Report of the Sub-Committee of the Colonial Advisory Council of Agriculture and Animal Health, which reviewed the scheme in the autumn of 1932. As is obvious from the conclusions which appear at the end of their report, the Sub-Committee were

fully satisfied that the scheme had justified itself, and they recommended its continuance.

Reports received from the Colonies show that better-trained officers have been available since the scheme started, and that their work is likely to be of material assistance to agricultural development. This report was adopted by the Council, and the Secretary of State has accepted it as the basis of recruitment for the Colonial Agricultural Service.

The Lovat Committee, in Parts II, III and IV of their report (Cmd. 2825 referred to above), dealt with the collection and dissemination of information, the organization of research, and the organization of Colonial Agricultural Departments. These matters were considered by the Colonial Office Conference of 1927 and were the subject of discussions at the Imperial Agricultural Research Conference held during the same year in London. A second Committee, also under the Chairmanship of Lord Lovat, was appointed in that year to formulate practical proposals for submission to Colonial Governments to give effect to the Resolutions of the Colonial Office Conference on the subject of Colonial Agricultural Scientific and Research Services, and the report of this Committee was issued in 1928 as Cmd. 3049. The Report dealt exhaustively with the Colonial Agricultural Service, and recommended the establishment of a Colonial Advisory Council of Agricultural and Animal Health, and defined its functions. It also dealt with the establishment of central Research Stations, and made proposals for welding the discrete services into a unified Colonial Agricultural Service.

The majority of replies received from Colonial Governments endorsed the proposals in principle and, with but few exceptions, these Governments agreed to provide funds necessary for the establishment of the Council, and for the appointment of an Agricultural Adviser.

The appointment of the suggested Intelligence Officers was left for further consideration when the ground covered by the Imperial Agricultural Bureaux, established as the result of the Imperial Agricultural Research Conference of 1927, had been further examined and determined.

Unfortunately the stress of financial circumstances which has prevailed during the past few years prevented consideration being given to the establishment of further Central Research

Stations (beyond those of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad, and the East African Research Station at Amani), and the same causes have led to the abeyance, for the time being, of proceeding further with the unification of the Colonial Agricultural Service on the lines originally suggested. But the Council has approved a scheme of work for the East African station referred to above, and has considered a number of other research proposals in various dependencies. It has also examined into a number of problems affecting the animal industries on the Colonies, and has reviewed from time to time the work of the Live Stock Station established at Naivasha in Kenya. It may be asserted with confidence that these Research Stations have abundantly justified their existence, and the importance of providing "long-range" research facilities as an indispensable aid to the prosecution of agriculture, especially in the tropics.

In July, 1927, having done something for Forestry and Agriculture, the Secretary of State turned his attention to the Colonial Veterinary Service, and Lovat was made Chairman of a Committee: "To frame proposals for obtaining the highest degree of efficiency in regard to Veterinary Research and Administration in the Non-Self-Governing Dependencies that financial consideration permit.

The questions to be considered would embrace the recruitment and training of Veterinary Officers, their conditions of service, the organization of Research and Intelligence, the setting up and support of any Institutions required and methods by which the financial expenditure involved can best be met.

In framing their recommendations, the Committee should bear in mind that the principle of the ultimate control of a Colonial Scientific and Research Service has been approved by the Colonial Office Conference, and that specific proposals for the formation of an Agricultural Scientific and Research Service for the Non-Self-Governing Dependencies, with which the Veterinary Service must necessarily maintain close liaison, are now being framed."

This Committee recommended the establishment of a Colonial Veterinary Scholarship Scheme on lines akin to those already adopted for Agriculture, also arrangements for post-graduate instruction in Tropical Veterinary Science,

and the appointments of an Adviser on Animal Health and of a Standing Committee of Animal Health on the Colonial Advisory Council of Agriculture and Animal Health. Proposals were also included for the organization of research and the creation of a unified Colonial Veterinary Service.

The Colonial Veterinary Scholarship Scheme has been put into force, and certain provision for post-graduate instruction in Tropical Veterinary Science has been possible ; an Animal Health Committee of the Colonial Advisory Council has been created, and an Adviser on Animal Health was appointed by the Secretary of State, but the death of the first occupant of the post led to a vacancy which, owing to the financial stringency, has not as yet been filled. The same reasons have also made it impracticable for the present to consider the creation of Central Veterinary Research Stations, or to proceed with the unification of the Colonial Veterinary Service on the lines recommended by the Lovat Committee.

## CHAPTER XIII

APPOINTMENT AS PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS. WORK OF THE OFFICE. CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERSEAS SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE. TOUR IN CANADA TO ENCOURAGE SETTLEMENT. ILLNESS ON THE VOYAGE TO NEW ZEALAND AND RETURN HOME. RESIGNATION OF UNDER-SECRETARYSHIP. APPOINTMENT TO AND RESIGNATION OF CHAIRMANSHIP OF OVERSEAS SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE.

1927-1928

AT the beginning of 1927, Lovat resigned from the Forestry Commission in order to take up the appointment of Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Dominion Affairs. Few men at the age of fifty-six would have accepted such a subordinate post after making a great name in so many fields ; and some of Lovat's friends thought he was making a mistake in doing so. By nature a *frondeur*, his position of Chairman of the Forestry Commission had not seriously curtailed his liberty of action ; and we have seen that, in questions affecting the land, he had criticized the Government almost as freely as if he were not occupying an official position. As Under-Secretary of State responsible for defending Government policy in the House of Lords, his lips were closed for the first time in his life, and it is doubtful whether he found the sweets of somewhat lowly office sufficient to console him for his silence. His friends were really right. It was too late to start at the bottom of the official ladder and he was too big a figure to occupy a subordinate post with comfort either to himself or others. His acceptance illustrated well both his fundamental modesty and his willingness to put his shoulder to the wheel wherever he conceived his duty to be involved.

So we now meet Lovat in a new part. No longer a buccaneer of politics criticizing measures on their merits, his speeches

in the House of Lords take on the measured official tone and lose their picturesque and individual turn of phrase. For nearly two years his business in the House is to answer questions instead of posing them ; and, greatest novelty of all, the answers are not his own but those of permanent officials inspired by the policy of a Cabinet of which he is not even a member. The House of Lords, in which he had sat for thirty-five years, must have appeared to him a strange place as he defended and explained, clearly and competently, Government policy over that surprising organization, the Basle Trading Company ; or laid bare the financial intricacies and the chemical secrets of the Concession for extracting salts from the Dead Sea. He must have been relieved when such a question as African policy came up as it did in December, 1927. A White Paper on "Future Policy Regarding East Africa" had been recently issued and attracted criticism from Lord Olivier. As is inevitable when Kenya is mentioned, "trusteeship" and "paramountcy" were alike held to be in jeopardy. Here Lovat was on ground he knew. Having been himself in Kenya, the Sudan and South Africa, and understanding native mentality as well as he did that of women and of his own Highlanders, he answered the critics with an assurance which carried conviction. Deploring vague words like "paramountcy" and "trusteeship," he laid it down that "In dealing with native cases it is best to use terms that you can certainly give effect to and not pretend that you can do more than you are able." And he called attention to the definition of paramountcy laid down in the White Paper of 1923. The question is sure to come up again, so the words are worth quoting : "The interests of the African natives must be paramount ; and if and when those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail. Obviously the interests of the other communities, European, Indian and Arab, must severally be safeguarded." One wonders what General Hertzog thinks of this doctrine.

What the Dominions Office staff thought of Lovat's disorderly fashion of keeping his papers we do not know. They are too loyal to let the cat out of the bag. But it is worth mentioning that his own healthy distrust and dislike of officials in the abstract disappeared in the presence of concrete

officials who were competent and public-spirited. He had nothing but good to say of the Dominion Office officials, whom he knew ; and was wont to compare them more than advantageously with those of the Foreign Office, whom he did not know. We must all, at some time or other, have suffered painfully from having a pleasant and old-established prejudice shaken by personal experience ; and Lovat was lucky in being able to admire and like the individuals of a class to which as a whole he was never reconciled.

Although acting as Government spokesman in the House of Lords and doing a certain amount of other routine work Lovat devoted most of his time whilst in office to the work of Overseas Settlement. In fact, one of the reasons, if not the principal reason, why he accepted office was that he believed that, as Under-Secretary, he would be in a better position than as a private individual to push forward a policy for which he had what almost amounted to a lifelong passion. And, almost as soon as he became Under-Secretary, he was appointed Chairman of the Overseas Settlement Committee in succession to the Earl of Clarendon.

The movement of population during 1927 was considerable, and the result of operations under the Empire Settlement Act, which included assistance to over 63,000 persons to proceed overseas, was regarded as satisfactory by most people except Lovat. He was convinced that there were openings overseas for many more people, and he began a careful study of the chief causes which prevented their settling in the Dominions. Holding that the Dominions greatly underestimated their own capacity of absorption, he deprecated the restrictions they placed on the admission of assisted immigrants. On this thorny subject, in which prejudice and bad faith play such a large part, he took the common-sense line that, if British immigrants of the right type strengthen the Empire and the Dominions, it is immaterial whether they are helped to cross the ocean or not. The importance of suitability he recognized fully ; and he was anxious to provide facilities in the United Kingdom which would test the qualifications of certain categories of immigrants before they sailed and at the same time provide them with some preliminary training to help them settle down in their new life. In this way he also hoped to induce



to emigrate a number of suitable persons who were held back by unjustified misgivings as to their capacity to cope with overseas conditions. Apart from assisted passages, the cost of travel had risen beyond belief since 1914, and was an obvious hindrance to emigration. Lovat set himself to remedy this evil as well as that of the shortage of accommodation for married farm workers overseas, which was acute.

In pursuance of his plans for training, Lovat set out to enlist the active sympathy of local authorities in the closely-populated urban areas of the United Kingdom. In the areas which he visited he was successful in setting up local migration committees which co-ordinated all local migration effort, both public and private. Similar local migration committees were set up in many other parts of the country. As a result, four training centres were established for boys and three for women. In June, 1927, Lovat opened the Newcastle Boys' Training Hostel, where boys from the surrounding districts were trained for work on the land in the Dominions at the joint expense of the local migration committee and of the Government. In December, 1927, he addressed a conference at Leeds of representatives of various public bodies in Yorkshire, and advocated the training of boys on the lines followed at Newcastle. A hostel was opened at Hull in 1929. This, too, was financed jointly by the local migration committee and the Government.

In March, 1928, Lovat addressed a meeting at Bristol in support of the idea of a boys' training hostel. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm, a local migration committee was formed, and the hostel at Ham Green was opened by Prince Arthur of Connaught in that year. Similar action was taken by the Liverpool authorities, and Mr. Amery, in the presence of Lord Derby, opened the boys' training hostel there on October 26th, 1929.

The local migration committee at Newcastle also established, in February, 1929, a hostel for training women in household work in preparation for their departure to the Dominions. No other local committee took up the training of women, but the Church Army had already opened a hostel for the purpose at Cardiff in December, 1928, and on October 10th, 1929, St. Mary's (Portobello Road) Training Hostel for Women was formally opened by Cardinal Bourne.

The establishment of this hostel was due directly to the personal efforts of Lovat and his wife. Provision for the training of single men for farm work overseas was made by the Ministry of Labour and not by the Overseas Settlement Committee, and over 9000 young men went from the training centres to the Dominions.

Lovat realized the necessity of co-ordinating and directing the activities of local migration committees and other voluntary bodies which dealt with migration and training, and with his usual "flair" for picking the right man for the job appointed Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. H. Hudson, late in July, 1928, to act as Director of Voluntary Organization and of Local Migration Committees in this country. Colonel Hudson was a Northumbrian who welcomed the possibility of a chance in life for boys in urban areas. He played a large part in the inauguration of the Boys' Training Centre at Newcastle, and in the subsequent establishment of the boys' hostels at Bristol, Hull and Liverpool, and the women's training hostel at Newcastle ; and he carried out his duties with great energy and enthusiasm until his death in February, 1929.

In August, 1928, Lovat set out with the intention of touring Canada, New Zealand and Australia in the interest of land settlement. He was not well at the time, and it was with reluctance and misgivings that he undertook the long journey. In vain his wife pressed him to take the faithful Vickers, who would have saved him an infinity of trouble in minor matters and kept an eye on his health. Indifferent to his own comfort, he would neither incur the extra expense himself nor charge it to the Government. His first letter to his wife, written just after starting, shows little of his usual buoyancy.

"EMPIRE TOUR,

*4th August, 1927.*

Just on board the ship. Usual feeling of horror ! I have never seen a grimmer shipload, plainer looking women or tougher looking men. Time will never go. I shall count the days and hours. Thank heaven this will be, I hope, my first and last Empire tour. I like the books you got me. I was so

rushed I had no time to get any for myself, but saw Mother and got my pyjamas, which, as you said, were the two most important final acts !

We are not getting on well with the Harvest Scheme, which is an anxiety on the top of many others."

The fact was that the difficulties of land settlement on a large scale in Canada had not been sufficiently realized in London, and proved more stubborn than was expected. They began to show themselves on the voyage, as will be seen from the following letter to his wife.

" EMPIRE TOUR,

*5th August, 1928.*

(On board ship.)

Just had a cable that the Harvesters' Scheme is all right; but though this is satisfactory, the tone of the Canadian cables make it clear to me that I shall not have an easy time with Egan. We have thrust this business through with the goodwill of the Prime Minister (Mackenzie King) but not of the Minister and Deputy Ministers concerned. An error in judgment and tact. I have found a few acquaintances on the boat, and I shall probably arrange some bridge, but think the money-grabbing, rough-necked type looks to be the major part of the ship's company. What a wonderfully small portion of the civilized world is out of the raw stage, and even then the number who are 'non-crudes' is surprisingly small."

Once face to face with his difficulties and with the men with whom he had to deal, Lovat regained his usual confidence and spirits. The programme was as exacting as it well could be. He not only went through it unflinchingly but extended it far beyond its official limits. After seeing the Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, at Ottawa, he travelled to Toronto, where he arrived on August 21st, and saw Mr. Howard Ferguson, the Prime Minister of Ontario. His old friend, Colonel Alexander Fraser, was awaiting him, and speeches, deputations and dinners took up every moment of his time. Lord Willingdon, the Governor-

General, had come to Toronto and introduced Lovat in a speech at Government House on August 24th. His Excellency, whilst refusing to be drawn into controversy, remarked: "The official immigration doves were rather fluttering when first Lord Lovat arrived at Ottawa, but after a few days of his calming influence they worked together in perfect peace." And Lord Willingdon concluded by saying: "I do not know any man in our country who has done more to uphold the unity of the British Empire than Lord Lovat." How controversial the subject of immigration is in Canada is illustrated by His Excellency's saying later in his speech: "I think these gentlemen would like me to be drawn into a controversy which I have been avoiding for two years; but I cannot say anything regarding the immigration problem." Lovat was there to say something about it; and, in returning thanks, expressed his conviction that development and immigration must go hand in hand. He had been pleasantly surprised at the hearty spirit of co-operation he had met since his arrival in Canada, and had received a courtesy and consideration which far exceeded his most sanguine hopes. The Prime Minister of Ontario was guardedly sympathetic. "We in Canada do not like to be overcrowded. We want sane, reasonable, gradual development; and it is our part to aid his Lordship to transplant those fitted to become citizens of this Dominion."

It was the day after this dinner that he wrote to his wife giving some impressions of the tour up to that time:

"EMPIRE TOUR,

*August 25th, 1928.*

All has gone well up-to-date. Since I wrote I have been to Quebec (the only place we were not welcomed with open arms) and back to Montreal for a final round-up of work with the C.P.R. and National Railways. I had a long talk with Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister. He is much better disposed to British Settlement than I had expected. I gave him the whole of our case and I think he means to play up. He has a bad press in England and is supposed to be too pro-American. I thought so too for some time;

but after our talk, and all he has done for us, I am inclined to think that his previous actions were more on account of fear of his French-Canadian and Liberal majority, than on account of his real wishes.

I am rather tired of being continually polite, but otherwise am very well."

Besides discussing migration problems with the Prime Ministers of Provinces and their Cabinets, he met the leading officials of the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National Railways, and of the Hudson's Bay Company and, together with Mr. Plant, of the Dominions Office, went into the question of land settlement and farm employment very thoroughly with them. He also made a point of getting into touch wherever he went with the various voluntary organizations and with representative private individuals and ascertaining their views. This involved attendance at large numbers of meetings where questions were asked and answers had to be given, and at numerous luncheons and dinners at which speeches had to be made.

Lovat also determined to visit as many new immigrants as possible in order to hear what they had to say as regards their position and prospects, and to see for himself those districts of the Dominion where there were said to be opportunities for further settlement. Besides traversing those parts of the country served immediately by the main railway lines, he made a good many tours of inspection by motor car and also carried out ten special journeys by train and by car through parts of the undeveloped areas of Northern Ontario and the Peace River country. He missed by one day the great Highland Gathering at Banff, which drew enormous numbers of Scotsmen from all over Canada and lasted four days. This must have been a disappointment; but it was more than made up for by his visit to Vermilion in Alberta. Here he had the most enjoyable experience of his tour at a Highland Festival organized in the new Clandonald Colony. He lunched in the open air in the grounds of the Priest's house, whilst the families were assembling in a neighbouring field by horse-waggon or by car. About two hundred and fifty people gathered from the farms of the colony and Lovat addressed them and presented prizes for the best farm and



*Mount Simon Fraser, Ontario*



other competitions. With Pipe-Major MacMillan in full dress and his pipes at equally full blast, it was quite a family affair.

At Valhalla in the Peace River country he made friends with a Scandinavian community engaged in mixed farming. They were probably Norwegians, but may have been from Sweden or Denmark ; for, much to the annoyance of the inhabitants of the three very different countries, the Dominions people make as little distinction between them as do we ourselves. After an exciting game of quoits he dined in a typical Scandinavian farm kitchen with the leading people of the community crowded round him. A short address at the Community Hall, where the platform was draped with the Union Jack, was followed by " God Save the King," sung to the accompaniment of a piano played by a Scandinavian girl.

Though there may have been differences of opinion regarding some points of policy, nothing was left undone by the Dominion Government or the railway companies to facilitate Lovat's programme. The Dominion Government placed at his disposal for the whole trip the services of Colonel Rattray, who was then the head of the Land Settlement Board of the Department of Immigration and Colonization, whose staff provided motor transport whenever required. Mr. Robb, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Canadian National Railways, arranged that Lovat should have the use of his private coach on the railways ; and instructions were given that this coach, which was in the nature of a travelling hotel, should be attached at any time to any train as and when required. In spite of these arrangements for Lovat's convenience and comfort, the continuous travelling, together with the manifold engagements which crowded on him at every point of the journey, must have been most exhausting and, without the method and constant assistance of Mr. Plant, would have proved beyond his strength. As it was, he was always ready to make any unexpected effort which might help him to fulfil his mission. Always accessible to anyone who had anything to say to him, he made a deep impression on all he met.

This part of the narrative would be incomplete without some mention of the railway official who was attached to



Lovat in order that the arrangements for his travelling should run as smoothly as possible. Mr. Freddie Biette was a man of infinite resource and of a rare dry humour which was exactly after Lovat's heart ; and at the conclusion of the tour he presented him with a gold cigarette case. The inscription "To Freddie Biette from his friend Lovat" had just that touch which Lovat always showed in dealing with those who served under him.

As the result of his tour, Lovat was greatly impressed by the general prosperity of the people in Canada, whom he found anxious to see an increased flow of British settlers. It was agreed that the most natural method of securing that increase would be by a substantial reduction in the general passage rate for migrants going from this country to Canada on their own account. The hope was expressed that negotiations with the Shipping Lines might result in a reduced rate of £10 (the normal ocean passage rate at the time being £18 15s.). This special rate of £10 for "bona fide" migrants from this country to Canada was eventually arranged with the Shipping Lines, and came into operation on January 1st, 1929 ; and Lovat secured an important concession from the Canadian authorities under which they agreed to regard as non-assisted migrants, persons who proceeded at the £10 rate.

Lovat's tour in Canada confirmed him in his view that there should be the prospect of a career on the land for migrants proceeding from this country to take up farm employment. He felt that boys as being less able to look after themselves, and families as being less mobile in the search for opportunities, needed some special help. In order to provide an incentive to boys, an agreement was entered into with the Canadian Government under which boy migrants who had shown themselves worthy of encouragement could be given advances which would enable them to take up farms of their own. Unfortunately, in consequence of the economic depression, this scheme has so far not been brought into operation. It may be said, too, that for the same reason Lovat's other schemes for assisting migrants overseas and for improving their prospects there have never had an opportunity of proving their value.

As regards families, schemes were arranged with the

Governments of Ontario and Alberta, with the Canadian Pacific Railway and with the Canadian Northern Railway and White Star Line for building cottages where British families could live near their work on the farms, where accommodation for them would otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain. The intention was that the cottage schemes would serve as a temporary training ground for families who would look forward to taking up farms of their own or to finding some other permanent opening. As a further step, a land settlement scheme for one thousand families was made with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in order to give such families as duly qualified in the cottages an opportunity of becoming established as farmers. Lovat also arranged land settlement schemes for families from the United Kingdom with the Canadian Pacific Railway and Hudson's Bay Company and with the Dominion and New Brunswick Governments.

There was a deal of talk at this time, as there has been since, of the failure of settlers who had been "lured" to Canada by false pretences. Experienced people know that a few disgruntled individuals, ready to blame anyone or anything but themselves, receive a publicity which is never reached by the far greater number of successful settlers. Their complaints, taken up by well-meaning sentimentalists and exploited by interested opponents of immigration, may well give rise to a public outcry loud enough to wreck the best of schemes. That Lovat was satisfied with the lot of the settlers as a whole is shown by an extract from a letter to his wife written just before he left the Dominion.

"EMPIRE TOUR,

*15th September, 1928.*

The Settlers on the whole have done wonderfully well ; 85 per cent are on farms and many of the remainder have taken up other work. We saw something of the harvesters. I think 80 per cent will stay for the harvest work till October, and of them 70 per cent will settle in Canada. Illness and Bolshevism wrecked some of them, but inability to look after themselves is the chief trouble."

That Lovat had not forgotten either his racing or his family is shown by another letter of the same date.

“EMPIRE TOUR,

15th September, 1928.

EDMONTON.

Did you get my wire about ‘Gun Carriage?’ I had something on at seven to two, the race was worth £——, the winner sold for £——. I am out of a bad horse for which I paid £——, it cost in all, say £—— more, and won £—— by being second five times. Now you will be able to pay all the expenses for poor Father Maurus.<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving I gave Shimi £2 on Arctic Star at 6½ to 1. I also made a small bet for Father John<sup>2</sup> and Father I. Williams which came off, so left them all very happy. I wish Shimi,<sup>3</sup> whilst I am away, to visit a certain number of tenants and crofters. He need not do more than devote one day a week to this during his holidays.

Did baby<sup>4</sup> and Hugh<sup>5</sup> get their wires from me?

The wires were as follows :

To baby : Lovely weather, no ships, no icebergs, no polar bears. Love, DADDY.

To Hugh : Lying off Belle Isle, thick fog, icebergs all around, jazz band playing to keep polar bears off the bridge. A kiss to Rose,<sup>6</sup> DADDY.”

Lovat sailed in the middle of September from Victoria, where he had a game of golf with his old friends, the Crease brothers, whose parents had settled there long before any railway stretched across the continent. Had he travelled more often officially, he would not have left the arrangements for his voyage to New Zealand in the hands of a Government Department. He would have looked after them himself and escaped the miserable accommodation which, undoubtedly, contributed to his breakdown. That he, of all people,

<sup>1</sup> Father M. Powell.

<sup>2</sup> Father J. Maddox.

<sup>3</sup> The Master of Lovat.

<sup>4</sup> The Hon. Veronica Fraser.

<sup>5</sup> The Hon. Hugh Fraser.

<sup>6</sup> The Hon. Rose Fraser.

should have complained of discomfort shows that the conditions on board must have been beyond belief. Apart from this unique complaint, his letter to his wife, written on board, shows him well satisfied with the results of his tour and more than grateful for all the kindness he had received. He had left Canada at the height of her prosperity and he had good grounds for hoping that his hard work would bear good fruit. It may yet do so ; but it was the tragedy of his life that he should have died when so many of his schemes were buried, let us believe but temporarily, under the avalanche of the world collapse.

“ EMPIRE TOUR,  
19th September, 1928.

On board ship *en route* to Auckland.

This is the worst boat I have ever been on, overcrowded, only one deck, food bad, cabin very moderate. I have cabled the Board of Trade that I do not mean to be so badly fitted out on my return journey from Western Australia. We stop at Honolulu and Fiji. At the former place we have to answer twenty-nine questions in order to land. We finished off at Victoria with one hour to spare. Hard at it till the last moment and very glad of a rest here. Our private car stuck to us throughout, but in many places we took it very jolty runs. I was glad you were not with us. The C.P.R. and C.N.R. are most wonderfully hospitable. We could not have got through the work we did but for their assistance. Lord and Lady Willingdon too were charming, and are doing very well in Canada. Lady Willingdon was kindness itself. I am well upsides with things now. I have got off letters to Amery, Estate Office, Canada etc., and will have a slack time till Auckland. I consider the Canadian tour was very successful on the whole, and I got better results than I had hoped for. I trust the authorities at home will be satisfied and also what is far more important will ‘*play up.*’ ”

Mr. Plant was no longer there to look after him and, during the voyage, Lovat collapsed with a heart attack when playing a game of deck tennis. He did not take it seriously and a

letter to his wife written just before reaching New Zealand merely says that he cannot yet take hard exercise in the heat.

“EMPIRE TOUR,

On board ship—*October 9th*, 1928.

Our journey to New Zealand just over ; not too bad. Very friendly party of Australians. Some bridge and tennis. Not much of latter as weather too hot, and I cannot yet take hard exercise in heat. Lovely days at Honolulu and Java. Damp warm air with amazing vegetation, and most delectable fruits. The coral formation is wonderful. The surf comes right up to the beaches, but more usually breaks on the reef about half a mile outside, and then bright clear water with all kinds and sorts of gorgeously-coloured fishes swimming about as in a finger-bowl.

Australia appears to be in the grips of the usual Waterside Strike. I shall go back by New Zealand and Panama if it is not over soon. We have a full, but not too exacting, programme in New Zealand. In Australia I shall get a ten days' respite.

I am longing and longing for your letters.”

On arrival, he endeavoured to carry out his programme of visits and discussions in the North Island, but was again taken ill at New Plymouth. After a few days' rest under the doctor's care, he went to Wellington and again tried to carry on his work. He was able to discuss the New Zealand position generally with the Dominion Prime Minister and to discuss Australian migration with the British Government Representative for Migration in Australia, who had come over to Wellington at his request. But further heart attacks supervened, and he was wretchedly ill when he went to Government House at Wellington on October 15th. General Sir Charles Fergusson was laid up himself with bronchitis, but that did not prevent him from offering Lovat the kindest hospitality. Under the care of Lady Alice Fergusson he passed ten days as an invalid whose most active recreation was a drive with his hostess. There could be no question of his continuing the tour, and on October 26th he sailed direct for home via Panama.

In December, 1928, the Government came to the conclusion that the work of Overseas Settlement was so important and difficult that a whole-time Chairman was required, and Lovat resigned his office of Under-Secretary for the Dominions at the end of the year in order to accept the post. He had been given a task for which he was fitted beyond anyone else in the Kingdom ; and, had his health permitted, he would have achieved whatever measure of success was humanly possible. But it was the Gallipoli story over again, though without its poignancy ; and on March 18th, 1929, Lovat resigned owing to ill health.

During his short tenure of office a curious and unrecorded incident nearly led to his resignation. A former Government had promised the sum of £100,000 to the Southern Loyalists of Ireland and it came to Lovat's ears that the Government, on one of those technical excuses dear to the Treasury, contemplated not carrying out their pledge. Lovat informed the Cabinet that he considered that a point of honour was involved and that he would be no party to a breach of faith. He would resign if the money were not paid, and the Cabinet could imagine the scandal of the resignation of a Catholic Peer on the ground that the Protestants of Southern Ireland had been betrayed. The money was paid and our pledge, though a small one, was redeemed.

## CHAPTER XIV

PARANA PLANTATIONS AND VISIT TO BRAZIL. APPRECIATION BY THE HON. ARTHUR ASQUITH. CONVENER OF THE INVERNESSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL. THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 1931. LOVAT'S WORK AND PROPOSALS. THE OTTAWA CONFERENCE. THE "LOVAT REPORT" ON ECONOMICS IN SCOTLAND.

1929-1932

LOVAT was far from well when he arrived home in December, 1928, and it was months before he could lead a normal life. His private affairs needed an amount of attention which he was not fit to devote to them ; and he took no part in the debates in the House of Lords until December, 1929, when the subject of the forthcoming Imperial Economic Conference came up. He then spoke to advocate more ample representation for the Crown Colonies and Protectorates. The former alone had a population of fifty-five millions and an area larger than the United States of America, and they should be represented at the Conference by real representatives and not merely by officials as was usually the case. The argument was, no doubt, sound ; but it had no chance of attention from a Cabinet to which officials were as dear as they are to all Socialist Governments.

Lovat had left the Board of Parana Plantations Ltd. when he became Under-Secretary of State at the Dominions office. He rejoined it as soon as he resigned office and devoted much of his time to the affairs of the Company as soon as he was well enough. The Company had bought the area of some three million acres which had attracted Lovat's attention and, in 1928, had acquired a controlling interest in the Sao-Paulo Parana Railway Company which owned eighteen miles of track and a large bridge over the Parapanema River, linking the State of Sao Paulo to the north of the State of Parana. Additional funds, raised by an increase of capital

and by an issue of debentures, enabled the railway to be extended another hundred miles and to be opened as far as the Tibacy River—a point within fourteen miles from the eastern boundary of the Company's land. Meanwhile, steps had been taken to open up the eastern end of the property by road construction and the provision of motor transport. From 1930 onwards, sales of land to settlers took place upon an increasing scale and, by 1933, a considerable township called Londrina had sprung up about two miles within the eastern boundaries of the Company's land.

Too few people nowadays bear in mind that, since the time of the "Nabobs" of the eighteenth century, money has been poured in a continuous stream into the English countryside by those who have sought their fortunes in the distant parts of the earth. To the marts of Turkey, of Persia, of India and of the Far East, are due many a stately mansion and modest manor house at home; and the results of British enterprise and hard work on plantations, on ranches and in mines scattered from the Arctic to Patagonia, have drained and rendered fertile much of the land of this little island. It was in this tradition that Lovat invested so heavily in Brazil. The cotton, coffee and timber of Parana were to provide new houses for the crofters and finer fields for the farmers of the Lovat Estates. But his natural optimism deceived him as to the time necessary to develop a huge virgin property; and he could foresee no better than others either the imminence of world depression or the upas growth of a narrow nationalism which threatens the whole structure of civilised prosperity. Thus Parana Plantations became an increasing anxiety to Lovat, who took a most active part in pushing its interests.

In 1931 he visited Brazil again with his nephew, Lord Eldon, and his eldest son, the Master of Lovat, who was then twenty. They inspected the whole territory as thoroughly as was possible and saw the local agents and superintendents on whom success ultimately depended. The Prince of Wales and Prince George were in Brazil and they visited North Parana with Lovat and inspected the works of the railway extension then in progress. Lovat came back from this tour more convinced than ever that the Company had a magnificent property. The next step was to get it settled, now that



it had been made easily accessible by the extension of the railway.

The land was being disposed of locally to Brazilians at an increasing pace, but, in dealing with an area comparable in extent to the counties of Kent, Sussex and Hampshire combined, the time factor was an element of importance to the success of the enterprise. To meet the difficulty, settlers must be attracted from outside Brazil; and the favourable opportunities available in North Parana had to be made known to those countries whence immigrants might be drawn. In this work of propaganda Lovat was conspicuous. In 1931 and 1932 he made several journeys in Europe; visiting Dantzig, Germany, Poland, Austria and Geneva, and discussing with official and unofficial agencies interested in overseas settlement the conditions obtaining in North Parana, including costs of transport, land, installation and of maintenance during the period which must elapse before the settler from overseas could become self-supporting.

No one could have been better qualified for this task. He could speak with first-hand knowledge of local conditions, with the authority of one who had exceptional experience of land settlement schemes in other countries, and, above all, with the conviction of his own faith that there was no other territory elsewhere which combined so many conditions favourable to successful and inexpensive colonisation.

Since his visits to the Continent and mainly as a result of them, several of the agencies concerned have called for independent reports upon the Company's property. In some cases (e.g. by the Germans and Danzigers) colonies have been established there, and in others (e.g. Poland and the Nansen Committee of the League of Nations) the Company's land has received official blessing as an area suitable for overseas settlement by their nationals or protégés.

At this point I cannot do better than quote an appreciation by Brigadier the Hon. Arthur Asquith, who worked with Lovat both in the Sudan and in Brazil.

"The success of Lovat's visits to Brazil and to the Continent was largely due to the fact that he had himself in a superlative degree the qualities of what he used to call 'a good mixer.' Men and women of all sorts and conditions, English and foreign, were disarmed and enchanted by his

gay gusto, his friendliness and his infectious optimism. He was on terms with them in no time—he carried them along with him on the flowing tide of his spirits—nothing human was alien to him—and, in the twinkling of an eye, alliances sprang into being founded upon a mixture of admiration and of affectionate enjoyment of his company.

The casual acquaintances of his travels—whether it was the Brazilian agricultural expert or business man, or the German or Italian banker, whether he was drinking ‘Golden Drops’ with the emigration officer of the Free City of Danzig, whether he was gambling for high stakes or, with apparently equal zest, playing penny poker into the small hours with the family of the Company’s Scottish banker in Sao Paulo—all succumbed immediately to the rare charm of his personality, and, by the letters they wrote when he died, testified to the sincere admiration and affection which they felt for him, and to the enduring impression which he had left upon them.

As a colleague on the Boards of these enterprises in which he was so keenly interested, he had rare and valuable qualities. These were mainly the qualities of a cavalry leader—reconnoitring in advance—impatient sometimes whilst the infantry were plodding along to the attainment and consolidation of a first objective, because he saw other objectives ahead and on the flanks. For instance, whilst the Company’s executive was concentrating upon the considerable tasks of procuring finance for the railway and carrying out its extension, his vision was ranging over the whole railway system of the State of Parana, devising means for its improvement by the construction of missing links and otherwise; studying what additional traffics might result and calculating the means and cost of completing the port works of the State, and what revenues their completion might produce.

Time dragged for him between the conception and realization of his projects, but he had many irons in the fire, and was restlessly active about them all, so that, though he wasted little time on rest or food or raiment, travelling by night and hurrying by day from task to task, the hours of each day were all too few for him.

His visits to the Company’s offices were usually unheralded and in the nature of descents by the ‘wolf on the fold.’ He would arrive full of enthusiasm for some new

scheme, brimming over with figures rapidly and not always accurately calculated in his head, and, oblivious of any other tasks upon which the staff might be engaged at the time, he would expect all to give their whole time and attention to collaborating with him in giving effect to what was uppermost in his mind.

His 'rapid measure' was unsuited to the details of office life. He would dictate—interrupted and followed by telephone messages from other quarters in which he was expected—and spatter his typed draft with amendments in a handwriting which was only occasionally decipherable by those who had struggled with it oftenest.

No respecter of papers, he crammed them into his pockets anyhow, and if, as too rarely happened, they returned after many days, they bore with them in their crumpled and unconventionally folded appearance ineffaceable evidences of their sojourn with him. But if he had none of the clerkly virtues, his zest and drive and optimism and fun made it a pleasure to work with him, and, as a colleague on a Board, his value was inestimable. His mind was constantly at work exploring our problems on independent lines and often casting new lights from unexpected angles.

With fundamental modesty, a streak of diffidence, and none of the obstinacy of the self-opinionated, he worked always as a loyal member of the team; in difficult times he never lost his courage, and on big questions he could be trusted always to take a big and generous view."

With no official position to occupy him in London, Lovat found time to do much work besides that entailed by Parana Plantations. He had been elected a member of the Invernesshire County Council as early as 1895, and had become Vice-Convenor ten years later; but his military duties and other public work, whilst keeping him in the closest touch with the Highlands, had not allowed him to take a very active part in the work of the Council. His active participation in that work dated from the passing of the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1929, under which the County Council was reconstituted.

This Act is the latest of a long series of Acts of Parliament which have in the course of the last fifty years changed the whole course of county administration. In 1929 the Convenor

of the County was Mackintosh of Mackintosh, who for over twenty-five years had presided over county affairs with tact, fairness and general acceptance. At the dinner given to him on the occasion of his retirement from the office of Convener, in which he was replaced by Lovat, Mackintosh recalled how in the days of the Commissioners of Supply the then Lord Lovat met them on the plainstones of Inverness, and after an exchange of greetings with Lochiel, Cluny and others, intimated that there was little to be done, and that he and the clerk would arrange matters. Even prior to 1929 the work of local government had been growing at a feverish pace, but it was distributed over various bodies—parish councils, district committees and education authorities. During the discussions which were taking place on the proposals of the 1929 Act the oldest county councillor in Ross-shire was asked his opinion. He summed it up by saying, "This will be a whole-time job." Under this Act a vast body of work, comprising problems of great variety and complexity—education, roads, public health, public assistance, police—was handed over to a single authority.

The Bill had been strongly opposed by the Convention of Royal Burghs and by the education authorities and parish councils throughout Scotland. It abolished at one fell swoop education authorities, district committees and parish councils. Small burghs—those with a population of under 20,000—found themselves deprived of powers which they had exercised for generations. It is no exaggeration to say that the Act was born in an atmosphere of hostility and anxiety.

So far as the County of Inverness was concerned the Act involved the merging of forty-two authorities into one single administration. The local authorities thus swallowed up consisted of thirty-three parish councils, eight district committees, and the education authority which embraced the whole county. The abolition of these authorities involved the retirement of forty-seven officials.

The transference of duties from so many authorities to the new administration, the appointment of new, and dismissal of old officials would in any county have involved problems, both administrative and personal, of considerable difficulty. In Invernesshire these difficulties were greatly enhanced by the geographical conditions. Invernesshire is not only the

largest county in Scotland, it is also the most widely scattered, stretching from Inverness on the east to the Outer Hebrides on the west. It takes a representative from one of these islands twenty-four hours or more to travel from his home to the county town.

The duties of the County Council, as reconstituted in December, 1929, were confined to making preliminary arrangements for taking over the new administration when the Act came into force in May, 1930. Its chief task was the preparation of the various administrative schemes required to carry out the work of the new body. Lovat threw himself into the task with the energy and grasp of detail which were characteristic of him. He appointed a Personnel Committee, which, with himself as Chairman and accompanied by the various technical advisers, visited almost every parish and district in the county. In these districts they met the local representatives and officials and inspected county buildings, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, and other public works. These official visitations were relieved of the tediousness of routine by the Chairman's good humour and zest in life. He was equally at home (as he himself expressed it) "with the wolves of Badenoch and the lambs of Lochaber." Not a fluent Gaelic speaker himself, he understood the language and could exchange thoughts in the ancient tongue. He took an interest in the life of each district, in sheep and cattle and crops and fishing and shooting.

The administrative schemes prepared by Lovat and his committee were subsequently approved, practically in their entirety, by the Government departments concerned, and were put into operation when the new County Council began to function on May 16th, 1930. The Local Government Act of 1929 has still many enemies, and the process of centralization which it brought about is open to criticism. Yet, whatever may be the case elsewhere, it can be said that in Invernesshire the operation of the new system has been attended with remarkable smoothness and a complete absence of personal bitterness. This was due partly to Lovat's tact and friendly disposition, but more especially to his sense of fairness and administrative grasp.

As the Ross-shire County Councillor pointed out, the office of Convener was a whole-time job, but Lovat managed

to combine it with the various business interests and public duties which fell to his lot. He was constantly on the move. In connection with one small pier he made over half a dozen visits to London and spoke in the House of Lords. In the early days of his convenership of the County Council he must have spent many nights in the train. His knowledge of public life and his personal contacts with Ministers and Members of Parliament were of great value to the County Council, but they involved also a considerable strain on his health and energies.

The Convener is an *ex-officio* member of every committee, and Lovat attended the meetings of all committees when it was possible for him to do so. He would sit through these committees hour by hour, his head in his hands, apparently buried in thought, and seldom intervening in debate. But all the time he was mastering the work of the committee down to the smallest detail. On occasions of doubt and difficulty he was appealed to as the final arbiter, and his opinions were accepted without question.

The problems attendant on the setting up of a new administration were aggravated by the national difficulties which culminated in the financial crisis of 1931. He faced these questions with his customary courage and energy. Economies, and particularly cutting down of salaries, are always unpleasant jobs. All the County officials, teachers and police had to endure "cuts." In all personal matters his suavity and reasonableness were a great asset. Even an official who was dismissed was heard to express pleasure at the way in which the Convener had dealt with him. Differences of opinion were bound to occur, but people always came away from these meetings with a profound impression of Lord Lovat's fairness and impartiality.

In fact, the crisis of 1931 seemed to restore all his old energy. The call was the very one to appeal to him. Always a bad "Party" man, he could enjoy the feeling that parties no longer existed and could throw his whole self into the business of helping to save the country from collapse. Sleeping in the train, he passed from place to place infecting thousands with the faith that was in him. Those who heard him in the Berwickshire election aver that no speaker stirred a Scots audience so strongly. Promising nothing but

hard times and reduced resources, he called on the electors for sacrifices for their country instead of plunder for themselves. How they responded is a matter of history. He and some others then gave the politicians a lesson which few of them have learned. The main battle won, Lovat set to work to consolidate the conquered position.

Besides effecting every possible economy on the County Council, he exercised his influence in wider spheres ; and in March, 1932, raised in the House of Lords the question of the cost to the country of the International Labour Office at Geneva. Salaries of £6000 a year with an entertainment allowance of £2000 were impossible to justify in times like the present ; and both the friends and the enemies of the League of Nations should do their utmost to keep down its expenditure. He counted himself amongst the former and thought the League served a good purpose, though it would be unable to prevent a major conflagration. The replies Lovat was given only convinced him that we were wasting £54,000 a year on the office ; and he raised the question again in the House of Lords in June.

Now that the country is again about to be presented with a programme of reconstruction and development such as has already caused two acute financial crises since the War, it may be useful to reproduce a proposal of Lovat's, made at the height of the last crisis, as much in the interest of the national economy as of employment. It is contained in a letter to *The Times* advocating the use of home-grown timber and was, without result, warmly approved in a leading article of the great journal :

“TIMBER FOR MINES.

PROPS FROM BRITISH WOODLANDS.

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A SCHEME FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT.

*To the Editor of 'The Times.'*

Sir,

If the national crisis is to be dealt with effectively, every saving to the State, however small, is worth investi-

gating with an open mind. I therefore ask your permission to put forward a suggestion by which £1,000,000 a year for three years could be spent on employment in rural areas, a considerable addition made to the gross traffics of inland railways, and a reduction of not less than £5,000,000 in expenditure outside the country.

We import into Great Britain in the average year just under £6,000,000 worth of pit-props, 95 per cent of which are produced outside the Empire. This import represents roughly 3,000,000 'loads,' say, 150,000,000 cu. ft., or 7,500,000 tons of timber.

There are in Great Britain to-day just over 250,000 acres of coniferous and 80,000 acres of mixed plantations of pit-prop age. There are also nearly 750,000 acres of other woodlands capable of producing some pit-prop timber, especially for those mines in which hardwood is in use.

Making due allowance for delayed thinnings, over-stocking, clear felling of unthrifty plantations on the one hand, and for scrub, neglected or under-stocked areas on the other, it is probably true to say that there is in Great Britain to-day the equivalent of 500,000 acres of plantations and woodlands capable of producing four 'loads' of pit-props an acre spread over a three-year period, say, 2,000,000 'loads' or 5,000,000 tons of pit-wood. To fell and transport to the nearest station and, in the case of coniferous timber, to peel, stack and dry such a tonnage of pit-props would cost over £3,000,000 of which 80 to 90 per cent would go in wages.

To restart home pit-wood production on a large scale three things must be done, none of which need offend the 'nonconformist' free-trade conscience :

1. Restore the flat rate, for full truck-loads of pit-wood consigned directly to the pit, which was in force in certain areas during the Great War.
2. Establish a system for the standardization, inspection and sale of pit-wood timber. If it were found necessary this could be enforced by a clause in the Marketing Bill applicable to pit-props only.
3. A full statement to be made by the Forestry Commission of the results of recent practical and scientific research on the subject.



The British pit-prop has never had a fair chance. Experiments at the Technical Research Laboratory, Princes Risborough, and practical experience in selected coal mines in England and Wales, have made it clear that, when well grown, winter-felled, peeled and dried, British pit-props have nothing to fear from foreign competition.

With a falling pound, rural unemployment and idle railway waggons, the time would appear ripe for action. Unfortunately in this case action entails collaboration between four Government Departments, and even with a National Government in power this may mean many months of delay. It must be remembered there is a time for felling, a time for peeling, a time for carting pit-wood timber. Unless a whole year is to be lost, action must be taken at once so that felling may be completed before the spring sap begins to flow.

It may be argued that this suggestion might put something into the pockets of the growers of timber. If this constitutes an objection to the official mind, there is no reason why in all cases of profit arising from Government action the amount so gained should not be compulsorily re-invested on an estate in planting operations, thereby turning over the money a second time in rural employment.

I remain, etc.,  
LOVAT.

BEAUFORT, BEAULY,  
*Dec. 15, 1931."*

As the Ottawa Conference approached, Lovat bestirred himself again in the interests of the Forestry industry. In June, 1932, he called the attention of the House of Lords to the importance of the industry and the necessity of its being properly represented in Ottawa. H.M. Government were by far the biggest forest owners in Great Britain and there were over 35,000 men employed in the industry. Imports of timber amounted to forty or fifty millions a year, and yet there was no one going to Ottawa who knew anything of the business. The Empire could supply a large part of the soft-woods and all the hard-woods wanted. The Timber Trades Federations were not the people to advise as to the interests

of the State and of the producers ; and the Canadian Government did not believe that the Dominion would get a fair deal. He proposed that an Advisory Committee be appointed at once. Lovat's advice was unheeded ; the Canadian Government do not consider they got a fair deal, and there has been nothing but ill-feeling and misunderstanding regarding this timber business ever since the Conference. That Lovat was not invited to go to Ottawa, quite apart from forestry, is an amazing instance of Government ineptitude. Here was a man fitted above all others by his personal character and his vast experience to smooth troubled waters and to oil creaking machinery. It is not too much to say that he was the only man whom it was indispensable to send. Any other might have been left out. And it is impossible to believe, had he been there, that either the minor absurdities which marred the Conference would have taken place or that the major results would not have been more satisfactory.

In July, 1932, a Committee was appointed by the Government "to consider the whole field of local expenditure (in Scotland) and make recommendations for securing reductions in such expenditure whether defrayed from Exchequer grant, rates, or other sources, and whether or not imposed on Local Authorities as a duty by Statute, order, or regulation." Lovat was appointed Chairman of the Committee and brought to the task those qualities which have been already noted—grasp of detail and superabundant energy. Both qualities were invaluable. Economy in local government is largely a matter of detail, and owing to the urgency of the question, a time limit of three months was imposed on the Committee.

The Committee comprised representatives of counties, burghs and cities ; and their interests, even in the matter of economy, were not always easy to reconcile. Six sub-committees were appointed to deal with such matters as education, roads, police, public assistance, housing and public health, together with a General Purposes Committee. Mr. Seggie, who was Secretary to the Committee, has given some notes on Lovat's work in the Committee. He writes :

" Situated as he was a considerable distance from Edinburgh and being engaged on other work in London, it was

very refreshing to find that the papers dealing with the work of the Committee found their way to him no matter whether in London or at Beaufort Castle. On one occasion they travelled after him on the Continent. His Lordship made use of the telephone on every possible occasion where he could not personally call and secure any points upon which he was working. That was a distinct feature of his chairmanship—the keenness with which he applied himself to the details of the work and his anxiety to be made acquainted with what the sub-committees were doing prior to the meeting of the General Committee. If a point occurred to him not dealt with by a sub-committee, he would at once ask me to note it for future discussion.

When the Reports were obtained, His Lordship went over them individually at his own home in Beaufort Castle. I can see him now in his study prior to breakfast delving into the Reports of the sub-committees. I can see him setting aside the work he was engaged on to snatch a hasty meal and then come back again as if he had never left the work and bring his mind to the point he was on prior to the interruption. He would then switch on from one committee's work to another and seemed to have that faculty of retaining in his mind loose ends which perhaps an ordinary individual might lose sight of. Never once did he leave a matter in a half-finished state. He had to see the outs and ins of the whole problem, discuss its bearings in different directions, and finally he would sit back and come to a decision which he thought was in the best interests of all."

Associated with him on the Committee was Sir Henry Keith, who acted as Vice-Chairman, and whose experience of local government, and particularly of educational matters in Scotland, is unrivalled, and it was characteristic of Lovat that he took full advantage of Sir Henry's expert knowledge. A faculty for co-operation and a willingness to consider other men's views was one of the secrets of his success.

The Report known as "The Lovat Report" was published in November, 1932, and was a complement to the more famous May Report which covered wider ground; and Lovat had the somewhat rare privilege of being able to secure that it was unanimous. When the diversity of interests represented in the Committee, and the complexity of some of

the subjects are considered, this was no mean achievement. No Report advocating drastic reductions in local expenditure could fail to arouse criticism, and the Lovat Report was no exception. Expenditure on education, social services, roads, etc., involved questions of general policy on which men hold sharply conflicting views. Yet, whether one agrees with all the conclusions or not, the Report must impress everyone with the masterly grasp of local government finance in Scotland which it presents. A study of this Report is essential for anyone who wishes to appreciate the financial problems which both the National Government and local authorities have to face. The Report points out that Scottish problems are not the same as English problems, and bears in its pages the impress of views which Lovat had time and again expressed in his speeches : " Scotland probably suffers more than England from spendthrift legislation from the fact that Bills are usually drafted for the larger country, and Scottish legislation is, as a rule, legislation ' by reference.' As conditions in Scotland differ widely from those in England the result is often not only unsatisfactory but expensive."

As someone has expressed it, England demands a late dinner menu, while Scotland would be content with the less expensive but equally nourishing " high tea." The Report also points out that the Secretary of State for Scotland deals, in his various roles, with education, public health, public assistance, police and agriculture.

" The heads of departments necessarily have a greater control of policy than in England, where each of the principal departments has a Cabinet Minister in charge—as a rule a popularly elected representative—who is not only more accessible but also more likely to give due consideration to the opinion of cities, burghs and counties as expressed by their respective associations."

Accordingly the Report contained the following recommendation :

" If economy in local authority expenditure is not to be a mere panic gesture but a permanent feature of Scottish administration, it is essential that in preparing legislation affecting local authorities' budgets, the considered opinion of those authorities should be asked for, studied, and, when possible, given effect to. *A Standing Committee representing cities,*

*burghs and counties should be appointed to consider and report on all Bills directly affecting local finance.* The findings of such a Committee should not only be presented to the Secretary of State for Scotland, but, in cases where there is legislation 'by reference,' to the Cabinet Minister responsible for the Bill in Parliament. It should be noted that the difference between requirements or absence of requirements in cities and burghs is often just as marked as that between town and county. The presentation of the points of view of all three parties responsible for Scottish local administration might obviate some of the unnecessary expenditure imposed by Parliament in their craze for uniformity, one of the most costly features of hasty legislation of the present time."

Not content with putting his views and those of his colleagues forward in the Report, he spoke in November, 1932, in the House of Lords strongly in the same sense against certain provisions of the Transitional Payments (Determination of Need) Bill; and his remarks are of interest now, when the topic has again become a burning one. He reminded the House that, as had already been mentioned, the Associations both of the Scottish County Councils and of the cities and burghs had protested against legislation by reference and against the Bill being applied as it stood to Scotland. Their protests had been ignored. Such action simply drove people into the Home Rule camp. Poor law in Scotland always had been administered locally, and safeguards against injustice existed which were not present in England. The principles of the May Report (regarding local taxation) were being lost sight of already. He might have added that the principles of his own Report were being equally violated. It should be mentioned here that Lovat was a convinced opponent of Scottish Home Rule. Always anxious to foster local self-government and trust to the man on the spot, he held that Home Rule would be a retrograde step; it would weaken the Empire as a whole, compromise the position of Scotsmen outside their own country and give an impetus to that provincialism which was particularly obnoxious to him both in public and private affairs.

Some other of the more important recommendations of the Lovat Report may be mentioned :

*Roads* : " That the incidence of highway costs be altered so that ratepayers be relieved of their present intolerable burden.

" That the executive functions of the Ministry of Transport in regard to roads and bridges now cease.

" That all grants for maintenance, repair and minor improvements, for major improvements and new construction . . . be allocated on a basis of the requirements of three to five years in advance."

*Education* : " Reduction of the Minimum National Scales, but that Standard Scales framed on a regional or other basis would be preferable."

*Public Health* : " That an independent enquiry into the whole subject of Public Health from every standpoint—health, social, administrative, and financial—be at once instituted."

*Public Assistance* : " That the cost of relief to all able-bodied unemployed, whether insured or uninsured, should be met entirely by the State."

*General* : " Local authorities would also benefit if there were set up in Scotland a branch of the Scottish Office where local authorities could have the advantage of personal contact with the administration."

Lovat's experience on this Committee led him to appreciate the value of co-operation between the representatives of local authorities in Scotland. As a member, and subsequently as Chairman, of the Association of County Councils, he had taken an active part in bringing the views of the counties before Government departments. Something more than this, he felt, was required. The burghs had their time-honoured means of association in the Convention of Royal Burghs. The counties and cities—Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen—also had their own associations. It was only on rare occasions and for specific objects that there was any collaboration between the three bodies. So far as finance is concerned, there is in the Lovat Report the definite recommendation of a Standing Committee representing cities, burghs and counties already referred to. Lord Lovat, however, envisaged a more permanent means of co-operation, something of the nature of a Scottish local government council or association for the discussion of matters

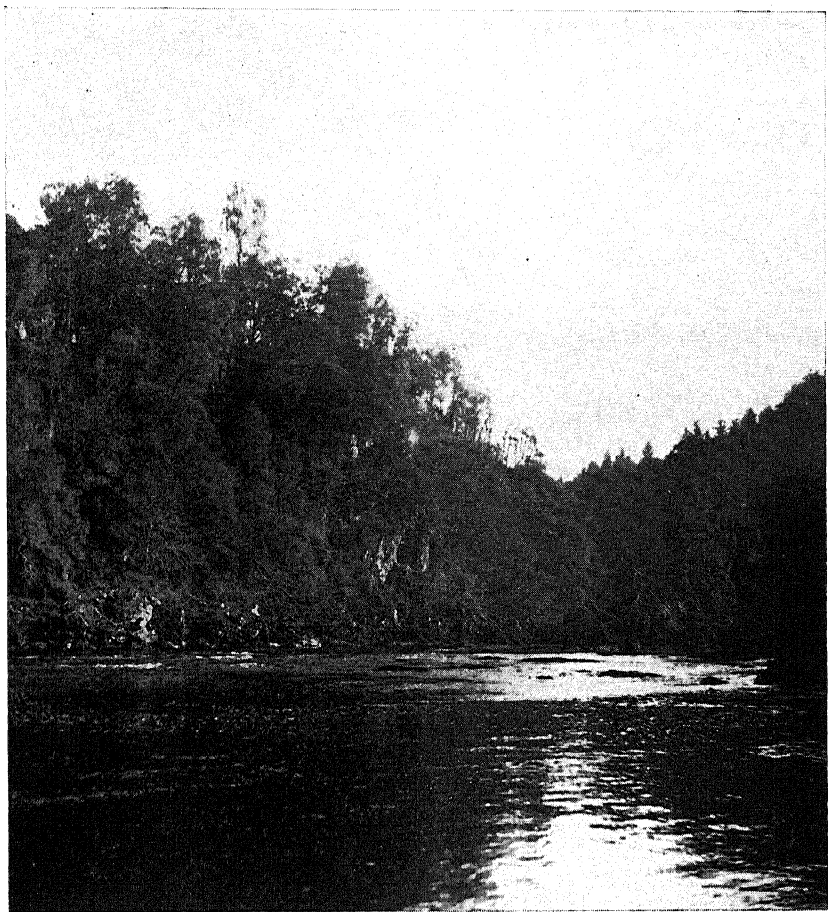
of common interest, for smoothing away causes of difference, and for forming a common front on questions which affected Scottish local authorities generally.

Lovat died before the financial crisis was over. The local and national difficulties caused or aggravated by the crisis, and the creation of a new County Administration under the Act of 1929, had left him with little time to devote to such questions as education, public health and social welfare in their larger and more abiding aspects. But he had thought deeply on these matters, and the speeches which he made in regard to them were full of interest. He held decided opinions on education. At the farewell dinner to the old Education Authority he assured them that the County Council regarded the education of the children of the county as the most important work which they had to do. The same attitude is reflected in the Lovat Report: "Education," we read, "is a social service of supreme importance, but it is not necessary that it should become oppressive to indicate its importance. Education need not be poor because it is cheap, and it is not valuable merely because it is dear."

And again in the same Report :

"It is nevertheless difficult to arrive at what is a fair salary for an expert and faithful teacher—his or her value is incalculable."

He was keen that children should receive the best possible training to fit them for after-life, but he was not much enamoured of some of the frills and novelties of modern educationalists. His attitude to the new Advanced Division School now being erected at Inverness was typical of his views. The cost, estimated at £40,000, was a serious matter for a poor county, but this, he believed, was justified by the stimulus which it would give to the teaching of such subjects as woodwork and other forms of handicraft, mechanical drawing, science, commercial subjects, and domestic science for girls. He was, however, insistent that the building should be as simple as was consistent with efficiency, and he rather deprecated making undue expenditure on gymnasias and gymnastic equipment. He believed that fresh air and games were best of all. Of simple habits himself, he disliked anything that savoured of "coddling" or luxury. Some anxiety was felt as to the financial burden which the new school



*The Beaully near Eskadale*





would entail, and it was largely owing to his tact and guidance that it is now in course of becoming an accomplished fact.

He had sympathy not only with the young, but with the underdog generally. He was strongly in favour of, and supported all measures to improve, the medical and nursing services in the county. He welcomed the Rural Housing Acts, and under his leadership the County Council effected a great improvement in housing conditions, particularly in the Western Isles. It was with genuine regret that, under financial stress, he found it necessary to slow down this work.

The Burgh of Inverness also had a good friend in Lovat. He had been made a free burgess after the South African War, and the connection was valued on both sides. He was punctilious in always allowing precedence to the Provost on all occasions within the burgh. It was owing to his personal influence that the Duke and Duchess of York visited Inverness to open the Royal Northern Infirmary. On that occasion the Duke of York received the Freedom of the Burgh, as did the Prince of Wales when he came to open the British Legion Conference and the Radiological Department of the Infirmary. On both these occasions the Royal visitors stayed at Beaufort Castle, and the smoothness with which these functions passed was due in no small measure to Lovat's practical help.

He believed in joint services between burgh and county, and he took an active part in carrying through the Joint Hospital and Medical Services and Joint Libraries schemes.

It has been a happy feature of local administration in the County of Inverness that political and religious antagonisms have been conspicuous by their absence. Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists, Catholic priests, and Free Church ministers work harmoniously together. No one interpreted that spirit better than Lovat. He seemed to create an atmosphere of humour and goodwill. He had a friendly and cheery word for everyone, and he could talk to everyone on their own special topics with sympathy and understanding. He laid well and securely the foundations of the new administrative scheme; his experience and quick judgment made him a sound adviser on finance, education, roads, housing, and many other matters. Yet in all these things there is no finality. Perhaps

Lovat's most abiding legacy to the County Council was his high standard of work, and his spirit of co-operation and fair play.

I cannot better close this chapter than by quoting some words of Sir Alexander MacEwen, late Provost of Inverness and Chairman of the Invernesshire Education Committee, to whom I am indebted for so much information.

"The powers of a Highland Chief are departed, his territories diminished, and his followers dispersed. If he would still rule in the land of his fathers, it must be as *primus inter pares*, by force of character and wise counsel. But in the case of MacShimidh<sup>1</sup> one sensed—keen business man though he was—the dignity and poise which come through great traditions. In no other county in Scotland has that tradition been so long maintained."

One can only pray that with his death it may not disappear.

<sup>1</sup> Gaelic for the Chief of the Clan Fraser, literally "The Son of Simon."

## CHAPTER XV

COMING OF AGE OF THE MASTER OF LOVAT. THE MAGDALEN AND  
NEW COLLEGE GRIND AT CHIPPING NORTON. EPILOGUE.

1932-February 1933

THE Lovat Report was the last piece of important public work on which Lovat was engaged. In the summer of 1932 his eldest son, the Master of Lovat, had come of age. It was just under forty years since he himself had done the same in very different circumstances. For to him the day had signified the assumption of a heavy load of responsibility and the succession to the hereditary honours of his position. His son was merely entering manhood like any other young man of twenty-one, and it was natural that the celebrations should be more modest in 1932 than in 1892. Apart from such differences, financial clouds hung heavily over the House, and the times were not such as to warrant much outlay. But it would have been against all tradition and would have bitterly disappointed the countryside had the day been allowed to pass without notice. There was no party at the castle and the celebration was confined to the farming and the tenantry and the local notables, headed by Mackintosh of Mackintosh, Lord-Lieutenant of Invernesshire.

The proceedings took much the same course as those described in an earlier chapter. Five hundred people sat down to lunch in a great tent and over a thousand watched the sports in the park afterwards. The young Master of Lovat was presented with a pair of Purdey guns by the oldest tenant on the estate, Mr. John Maclean, aged ninety-six, on behalf of the rest, and with a two-seater car by Mr. Duncan Cameron, for forty years head-stalker at Braulen, on behalf of the employees. The speeches were more than usually cordial, and, as the day wore on, the whole affair became more

and more a manifestation of affection and admiration for Lovat himself. It was as though those present almost had a presentiment of the future, and wished to show him their feelings before it was too late. Those who were there and those who read the accounts of the day felt, one and all, that he had reaped the reward he most prized for his forty years of faithful service. Nor were the celebrations confined to Beaufort. Lovat and his son subsequently visited Fort Augustus, Stratherrick, Morar and Mallaig, where the festivities and presentations, though on a smaller scale, were fully as enthusiastic.

The Master of Lovat had gone to Magdalen College, Oxford, before he came of age ; and, like his father, had developed a keen taste for the hunting field. On February 18th, 1933, the annual Magdalen and New College point-to-point meeting was to take place ; and the Master, who had spent the night in London, went down early to Oxford by car with the lunch. After changing in his cousin Peter Stirling's rooms, he drove out to Chipping Norton, where the races were to be held. Lovat was in some doubt whether to go. The weather was bitter and he was not feeling well ; but his keenness to see his eldest son ride prevailed over his doubts and he and his wife went down to Oxford by train and motored on to Chipping Norton. As they drove, he made a mistake at a turning, and, though he had not been near the place for years, he was put out and complained he must, indeed, be getting old. For his sense of direction was phenomenal, and he never lost his way in a place he had been in before. Once on the course, his buoyancy returned, and the success of his son in winning the Magdalen and New College Old Members' Race on his new horse, put him and the whole party in the highest spirits.

Peter Stirling was riding in the last (O.T.C.) race and they waited to see it, though most of the onlookers had been driven off by the bitter wind and snow showers. He came down at a "double" three fences from the finish and, seeing his horse loose, the party began to walk up a bank to get a better view. As they struggled up the bank, heads down against the storm, Laura Lovat and the Master were a little ahead ; and Lovat, a few yards behind, called out : "Go on, don't wait for me, I always walk slowly uphill." He seemed to be tacking up



*Lovat and the Master, 1932*



the hill and, when next his wife looked round, he was just pitching over on to the bank. Rushing back with her son she took him in her arms. He gave her one last look and died.

The countryside which had rejoiced so often with him was stricken at his death and bewildered at the loss of a leader on whom they relied for everything. They gathered in their hundreds and, weeping openly and unashamed, followed the simple coffin, wrapped in the Union Jack and lying on a farm wagon drawn by one horse, the four miles to the church. Snow was lying on the ground, but fitful gleams of sun lit up the long procession ; and as, led by Pipe-Major Ross, it wound its way up the valley, the strains of Lovat's Lament filled all the woods and hills with wailing. The road was lined by Lovat Scouts ; and Archbishop Macdonald of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, brother to that Colonel William Macdonald who had so often stood by Lovat's side in danger, and the Abbots of Fort Augustus and of Ampleforth, where Lovat's sons and nephews were educated, were waiting at Eskadale ; and, with all the rites due to a true son of the Catholic Church, Lovat was laid to rest in the quiet graveyard of the chapel which his grandfather had built within hearing of the waters of the Beaully.

Glowing tributes to his memory were innumerable ; but I will only quote two which never appeared in print. That of a cook who had earlier been kitchen-maid in service at Beaufort : " I would have sooner cooked dinner for Lord Lovat than for the King of England." And that of one of his nieces : " I am glad to have known one great man in my life. Having known Uncle Simon, one can understand the whole of Highland history." The general verdict of those who knew him can best be summed up in the words of Scripture : " Know ye not that there is a Prince and a Great Man fallen this day in Israel ? "

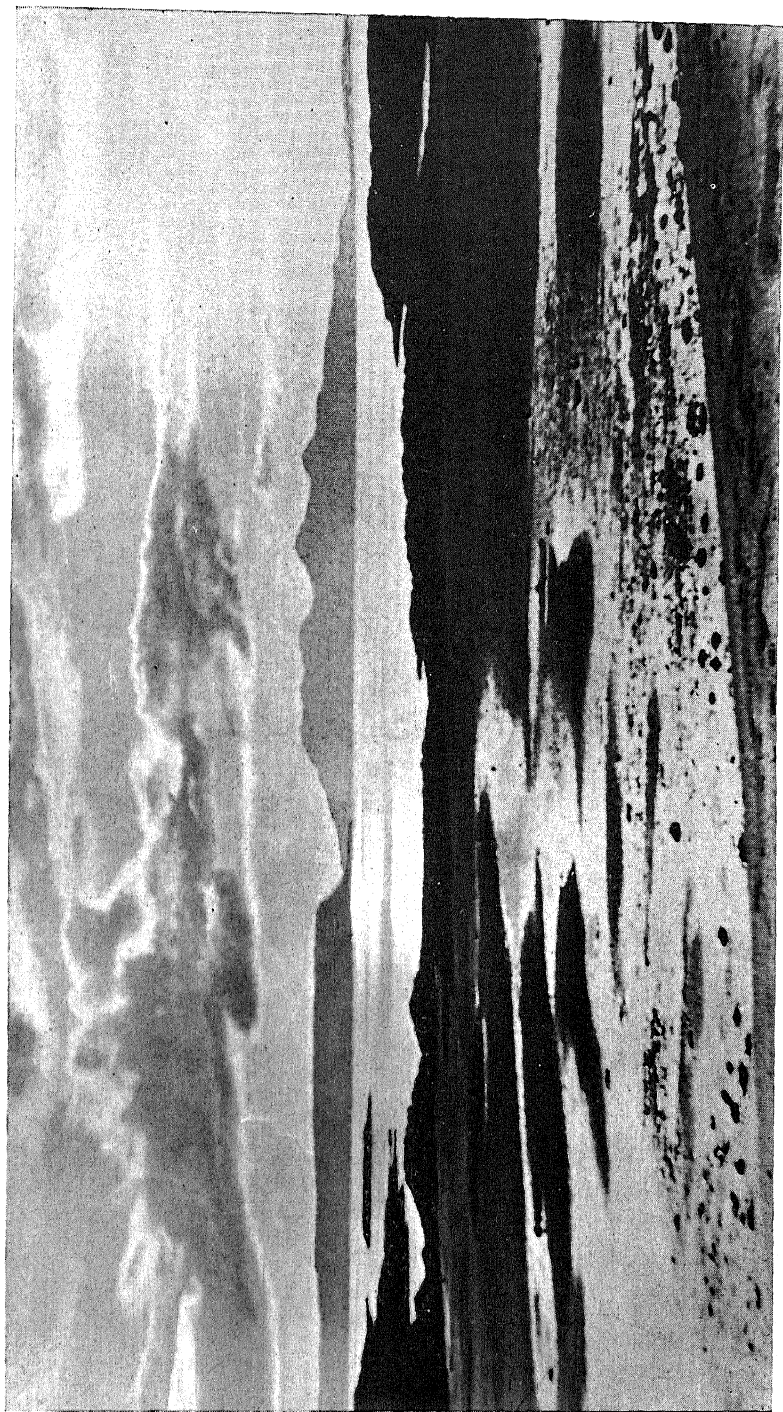


## EPILOGUE

WHEN Lovat died, many of his friends at first felt some bitterness mingled with their sorrow. Bitterness that his outstanding qualities had not been better utilized by those in authority and that he himself had not risen to a position of the first importance in the State. Two years have placed things in better perspective and we feel now that in his life he fulfilled himself. But it is worth while examining the reasons, or rather the combination of circumstances, which militated against his rising higher.

The fact that he never sought any office or place for himself is not sufficient explanation. It is a mistake to suppose that "pushers" always succeed, or that men who think only of the cause to be served and never of themselves, always fail to be recognized. But, while Lovat would leave no stone unturned, no wire unpulled, to help a friend, or further a cause he had at heart, it must be admitted that he took an almost perverse pleasure in creating an unfavourable impression on those with power to further his personal fortunes. He preferred the fun and moral satisfaction he got from this behaviour to the solid advantages which would have followed a more accommodating attitude. As it never occurred to him to complain of the results of this preference, it does not become his friends to do so; though they may with propriety deplore the loss it entailed on the State.

Whether his religion stood in the way of high office is doubtful; but it may have prevented his being offered the Governor-Generalship of Canada, a post for which he was, above all others, qualified. Many good judges considered that the appointment of a Catholic who was also an enthusiastic Imperialist and the most loyal of subjects would have been a master-stroke of policy. But few Governments care for master-strokes of policy. They prefer nominating a "safe" man whose appointment raises no vocal opposition



*Morar and the Western Isles*



## EPILOGUE

such as might have been heard from the Orange Lodges of Canada had Lovat been made Governor-General.

Lack of pomposity also stood in Lovat's way. A twinkle in the eye is not reassuring to men whose high positions have given them an idea of their own importance which they expect others to share. Here again pomposity is no sure road to high office, especially political office dependent on success in the House of Commons ; and by far the most powerful statesman during the War was without a trace of it. None the less, pomposity is one of the greatest assets an ambitious young man can have, and the lack of it will often prevent a first-class man from being taken seriously. Few amongst those with power to make or mar careers are good judges of character ; and they will not readily trust anyone with a keen sense of humour or a critical turn of mind. They fear that such a one will give trouble when in a responsible position, will kick over the traces and land them in difficulties. Such fears were quite misplaced in Lovat's case. His loyalty was such that his superiors would never have had a moment's anxiety.

It is impossible to say whether Lovat would ever have had a high command during the War had his health not given way. The Army is the closest of corporations, and Lovat was no longer a Regular soldier in 1914. Moreover, nowhere does the saying "to him who asks shall be given" apply more completely than to the Army, at any rate the pre-War Army. And Lovat never asked for anything in his life. It is possible, however, that he might have been an exception, owing not merely—perhaps not mainly—to his military talents, but to his friendship with so many highly-placed officers and to the esteem in which they held him.

But if his country was in some respects the poorer that Lovat never occupied high office or high command, he succeeded in giving to his fellow-men all that was best in himself. He followed a true instinct in making of his life an inspiration to others rather than a glorification of himself ; and the fruits of his example and the love of his name will live long after those of men more prominent in the public eye have perished.



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